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*G. Spelman*  
*Bonn 1873.*



Miss Letitia Buman

with her fond father

best love and wishes

July 6<sup>th</sup>  
1857

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BEAUTIES OF CHANNING.

WITH AN ESSAY PREFIXED

BY

WILLIAM MOUNTFORD.

LONDON :

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AN ESSAY ON  
THE GROWTH AND INFLUENCE  
OF THE  
CHARACTER  
OF  
WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.



## AN ESSAY.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING was born in the year seventeen hundred and eighty. He became a student in Harvard University, Cambridge, in his fifteenth year. In his nineteenth year, he went to live in Virginia, as tutor in a planter's family; in his twenty-second year, he was elected to the office of Regent in Harvard University; in his twenty-fourth year, he was ordained, as the minister of a Christian Society in Boston: in his thirty-sixth year, he was married; in his thirty-ninth year he became a happy father; he made a visit to Europe in his forty-third year; and he ended life in his sixty-third year of it.

Of Channing's life, these are the chief dates. But there can be no doubt, of there having been in it many other dates of great importance,

though not of a kind for history. For with a thinker, his greatest seasons are commonly his most silent; and what he himself talks least about, even when they are over. What can be said of the times, in which the mysterious inlet of the spirit opens, for the truth of God to flow in upon the soul? How can the season be told of, in which a man grows the wiser for his virtue: and how can the way be described, in which a person's meditations are the nobler and the wider, one year, from his resolutions for self-denial and righteousness, the year before? What is there to be told of hearing the wind in the trees: or of listening to the tide on the beech: or of how it feels, as the sun goes down? Yet with a thinker, a storm, a sunset, an hour's sight of the sea, may be seasons, and are sometimes great occasions.

Still from the Life of Channing, many a date might easily be given, that ought to be very interesting. For the discourse on Unitarian Christianity, preached in 1819, at Baltimore, will widen in its effects, very likely, so as that for its importance, it will prove to be historical sometime. 'Man, the Image of his Maker' has been a sermon, the reading of which has been an era in many a man's life; and from the preaching of which in Rhode Island, larger mental changes are to be dated, than from some

very famous conquests. And the year 1816 is the date of a sermon, that is greater than the gathering of an army ; for it is against war, and through men's minds it is working mightily towards ending war with the peace of Christ. And from Channing's completion of his Essay on Slavery, in 1835, it will be hereafter, as though American history had begun anew.

But are Essays and Discourses great works ? They are, if they are the expressions of a great mind. Before Channing's Works are thought the less of, as being merely Essays, Sermons, and Letters, let it be remembered, that there is not one of Paul's Epistles, but might for the length of it, be a sermon ; and that all the old Hebrew writings are printed together in one book. The greatness of truth is not in the wordiness of it, but otherwise, perhaps altogether otherwise. The divine teaching, which there was in the world once, is of holier mention than to be named just in this place, yet often it was delivered only in short parables.

A larger work than anything he has left, Channing did purpose ; but he never had strength enough to write it. And so he said, he could sympathise as few other men could, with an intellectual labourer disappointed in his dearest hopes. Perhaps his disappointment was greater than there was ground for. Because

from his occasional writings there is to be learned every great principle, probably, which he had become persuaded of, in philosophy and religion. Let the reader look at the table of contents prefixed to this volume, and he will be surprised to see, how easily from Channing's writings are to be gathered a whole system of morals, a philosophy of politics, principles of criticism, and a body of divinity.

It has been strangely objected to the intellectual greatness of Channing, that there is no new truth to be found in his writings. Such an objection as this is, is made in almost utter ignorance of the nature of the human mind. William Ellery Channing was a humble and reverential expounder of the Gospel ; he was not a professed propounder of new truths. It is not for the disciples of Christ to be looking for new truths in religion : nor is a moral truth, quite new, to be expected from any one. Perhaps at no time, did any moral truth feel quite new. Always, ages before the sunrise of a truth, there is the dawn of it ; and so the rays of it are never quite new. Even the special doctrine of the Gospel, that God is our Father, did not come into the world, without the last of the prophets having looked in its direction, and asked "Have we not all one Father?" And always with us all, the noblest teaching of duty is as though our own

hearts were being read off to us. There is a light that lights every man that comes into the world. In every Christian living now, there is the dawn of what will be the brightness of a hundred ages hence. All essential truths in morals and religion may easily be learned; but they are not learned to the same purpose by every body: and it is the spirit in which those truths are held, that is littleness or greatness, with any one.

Against the greatness of Channing as a Divine, there has been an allegation made, which means that he was not a Lardner, nor a Calmet, nor a Rosenmueller. But he was himself. And his calling was not to make a great dictionary, nor to lay old manuscripts together and find out the exact word that Matthew or Mark wrote, nor to be an Oriental scholar forgetting the present in the past. He was learned enough for his work; and his work was not philology, but something of a higher and much rarer nature than that. He was not merely such a man as may grow up in any college; he was not a philologist, but an evangelist he was.

Channing's greatness was of the soul; and so was what service he rendered men. The same truths are little from little minds, and great from great minds. Worthy utterance religion never has, except from a spirit wise and free, just and pure, loving, devout, and hopeful. And some



time perhaps, there has been an age of darkness, only for the want of one right thinker in it. Channing was one to feel what life is, and to make his fellow-men feel afresh its worth, and beauty, its awfulness and blessedness. He was one, so religious, that the word, God, had newness in it with his speaking.

It was the rectitude of his spirit, that was the wisdom of his writings. For his memory was not very remarkable, nor his logical power uncommonly great. But there was in him that Spirit of truth, that guides into all truth. And from among men, he was a lofty example of that divine guidance. His wonderful words were truth, that had found ready entrance into his soul, and principles, that had grown in him, he knew not how, perhaps. He lived a holy life; he kept himself like a temple; and so the spirit of God could and did dwell in him.

As a little child, William Ellery Channing was loving, truthful, and thoughtful; as an older boy, he was open, brave, and generous; and so he was described by one that knew him. According to the accounts of his fellow-students, his life at college was an exercise unto godliness; and with his classmates, his company felt like holiness. When he lived in Virginia, rather than take money, which had been remitted to him, by his widowed mother, he did without it,



and endured the winter without warm clothing ; and in hard and anxious study, he lost his health, and for all his life, as it proved. In studying to fit himself for the ministry, he was very careful to have only the Bible, as the origin of his Christian doctrines, and he said to himself that he ought to separate from all parties, by adhering to principles and not to men. As a minister and an example, he was very eminent. Yet in the earlier season of his ministry, he was saddened by doubts about his usefulness. He was brave itself with the public ; but with a private person he was modest, and almost diffident. He said, he felt himself nobody, in private. He was very reserved, when a young man ; and he could not help seeming cold, even with persons whom he warmly wished to have friendly with him. He was very generous with his money ; and some times he gave away so much of a large salary, as to know what it was, having food and raiment merely, to be therewith content. And always his way of living was very simple, and for his station, even plain. He was fond of children ; and when he heard of a little girl's telling her mother, that she had understood every word of some address of his, he said it was the greatest compliment ever paid him. He was very candid, and glad of correction from any one. " I acknowledge the justice of your reproof ; I have

been silent too long ;" was his answer to one, who almost severely blamed him, for not doing more, and something more publicly against slavery, than simply speaking against it from his pulpit. The remonstrance with him was in private, and most men would have said was unseasonable, and unjust, and presumptuously made. But Channing's answer to it was the greatness of humility ; was that self-abasement that is the highest exaltation.

As a young student, it was the wish of Channing to attach himself to principles and not to men ; and this was his care throughout his life. And it made him very jealous of all associations, and very scrupulous about what he joined. For he knew well how the best causes often end in the worst effects, when taken to by parties. He never would be a member of any Abolition Society, even when he was himself writing and acting against slavery more powerfully than all other anti-slavery men together. As a Unitarian writer, he was the best of his time, and singularly revered and loved : but almost he was afraid of the friends he made ; fearful of becoming sectarian, through having them attach themselves to him like followers. It was not from heading any political movement, nor from having a sect to advance him, that Channing was so powerful. Simply his influence was the action of soul upon

soul. Without noise, and just like the way of thought in the mind, was the manner in which Channing grew upon the public, till by many men, he was revered like conscience nearly, and loved like their own souls, almost.

His greatness was of the truest kind, and therefore not easily understood, nor allowed by some persons. They ask, what has Channing performed; what institutions has he founded, what bands has he made, for holding men in order: what has he done? Little, very little in that way, has he done. But what does the sun do? Shine, only shine. But without his shining, without his light and heat, there would be no forests, nor green fields, nor living creatures, nor spring time, nor autumn. And under the influence of Channing's spirit upon men, there are growing up kindlier customs, a more tender regard for human nature, freedom for the slave, and newness of religion. In Channing was silently wrestled out a struggle, which ages will be the better for: and in his mind were perfected those ways of thinking, along which, thousands of men are moving towards the heights of conviction, and sight of the infinite, and of heaven almost.

Channing may be regarded in his public character, as a divine and a citizen. But a divine, he would not have much liked being called, perhaps;

for he disliked being styled reverend. By the members of his congregation, he wished to be held, as a thoughtful and a Christian brother, and not as a professional man, whose business was with the Scriptures, while theirs might be with trade only, with commerce or with pleasure. Much and rightly he longed for Christians to be less dependent on ministers, than they are. His theology was nothing new, but as old as the Scriptures he hoped: and he became a controversialist for it, only when he was obliged to be. He knew, a controversial attitude was a great misfortune, but he judged it to be infinitely better than keeping silence on the truth, or being false to it. No long while before he died, he was told by an eminent member of an orthodox communion, that there were some very easy concessions, which might be made to Trinitarians: but he answered that he could not use phrases in one sense, for the purpose of having them understood in another. With him, it was a greater thing to keep sincere, for life, than at once to get more popular, and even useful.

Sectarianism was the abhorrence and the dread of Channing. He would not have been the head of a sect if he could. He loved his religious opinions, but was anxious not to love them in such a way, as to get bigotted to them. For even truth may be held in such a wrong

spirit, as almost itself to be false. This is a thing that ought to be understood. It would seem, that Channing was well persuaded of it. As far as Unitarians were a sect, like other sects, he had little interest in them: so he said, the year before his death: and yet just about the same time, in a letter, which he published, he spoke of his having a Unitarian cause, on behalf of which, he wished to be cautious, for it not to get hindered.

There are truths: and there is a spirit, that is truthful. For matters a man is sure of, he ought to be zealous; but he ought not to forget, that there are many things, that have not come to his knowledge. And for ever and ever, principles the best known will have to be held in a spirit of reverence towards what truth is unknown.

Perhaps there may have been persons willing to call Channing their Master, and his doctrine something like infallible. But to such people, he wou'd have said "I am little of a Unitarian." And these words, he did use once, and so showed himself a more trustworthy minister than ever, more nearly like those teachers, to whom it was said—Neither be ye called Masters; for one is your Master even Christ.

The works of Channing are so beautifully, and purely, and strongly religious, that almost they

are the religion of every one that reads them. For the reader can hardly help feeling, that the one Lord and one Faith are in them: and that whether his own old notions are in them or not, that very certainly there is in them the one Spirit, which Christians have been all made to drink into.

Religiously the closest relationships are not always between one Catholic and another, or one Unitarian and another. Channing knew himself nigher Fenelon than Priestley, great and good man, though he thought him. And very likely, he felt himself closer in spirit, to some monks, some bishops, some Quakers, than even to some of his own acquaintances. And a far wider brotherhood he had than he knew of perhaps. Theological change is very slow. Often a man is a new believer long before he can cease from his old words, his old creeds, his old prayers. In sectarian communions, there are unsectarian worshippers. There is many a church, in which Channing would not have been allowed to speak, but to which fellow-believers with him go; for it feels holy to them; but yet they rejoice to know of a holy of holies beyond, in which the spirit of Channing is true worship. Silently but surely, and very widely is Channing's influence working along with other powers of God, towards making Christians know of the one Spirit, in the one hope of which they are called.



Channing was as great a citizen, as he was a divine. It was very much in his spirit, that Boston has grown to be what it is, the joy of every visitor, and what is best in that country, that is the hope of the world. Only by what Channing was in the place of his residence, the whole world is the better, or is to be. For forty years, Boston was the home of Channing; the place he commonly dwelled in, and acted in, and talked in. And Orville Dewey has said, that his daily conversation was even better than his writings. He was not without aptitude for business. And his own great thoughts, he was himself active in carrying out. And nobly he showed the heroism of a good citizen. For the best actions were no easier with him than with others. Now and then his goodness was so good, as not to be understood at once, by some persons and even by many. And once or twice, he was so anxious for the right, that his resoluteness seemed to be wrong, even to some of his friends. But he was right altogether; and from those two or three actions, rather hard to be understood at one time, the meaning of his whole life is deepened now. For it is certain, what a disinterested and noble spirit, all his words are the utterance of.

So noble a citizen he was, that almost public errors were ennobled by his correction of them.

Temporary mistakes of a people turned to everlasting truths through him. An American ship was driven into a British port; and from what happened in consequence, Channing argued the great law of nations, for all times, and every country, and in a way it was never shown before. Political, sounds like an unworthy word for any of his writings, so unworldly they all are. His politics are true to human nature; and yet they are the thoughts and feelings of one free of the City of God.

Channing was a sufferer from ill health, from his twentieth year to the end of his life. His illness was from hard and anxious thought, at first, and was so perhaps all through his life. In nearly every thing else, but health, he was singularly fortunate; for he was happy in his parents, his friendships, and his marriage, in the place of his birth, and in that of his dwelling; he was happy in his ministry; and at the last, happy in his death, for it was in peace, and in fullness of faith, he died; on a Sunday evening too, with friends about him, and just as the sun was setting.

He had the best of friends; some of them men of genius, as well as the purest character. His home was of the happiest nature, every way. And publicly, the esteem he was held in, was of the highest. Always he was surrounded by



comforts ; and nearly always, there was some sweet voice nigh him, for him to listen to. But in the midst of these happy circumstances, every day there was at his lips an invisible cup, given him to drink from on high, and it was ill health. But he took it, sure of its being from his Father ; and so bodily weakness turned with him to strength of spirit.

In the earlier part of his life, Channing was sad and very reserved. As a child, he said himself, he was sorrowful, from feeling himself much in want of wisdom and goodness. And as a minister, for years, he was sad, from fearing himself to be unequal to his office. At this part of his life, he knew of more holiness, love, devotion, and wisdom, than he himself had : but he had not yet come to feel, that so it must always be with every one ; and that this necessity is not meant to torture, but to solemnise us. The higher a man is in goodness, the more do heights upon heights rise beyond him ; not to sadden him with his own lowliness, but to witness to him, what a spiritual world it is that he belongs to, so infinite and so sublime. And as a guide for man in life, and to walk beside him, there is Right, an angel from God, whose countenance is the more majestic, the oftener it is looked at, and whose eyes are the more meaning, the more they are minded. But those deep eyes are on a

man, not to abash him, but for him to drink in courage from, and hope, and strength.

Channing was very reserved, when he was a young man. His self-constraint was so great, that some persons thought it coldness: and he himself felt it, like a misfortune he could not get through; and sometimes, like a fault he had to be sorry for. But a fault it was not. With those, who are a little merry only, a man can be a little humourous; but a saint cannot sympathize, like a companion, with the little goodness of those, who are only a little loving, a little just, a little pure. He is restrained from this, by something else than his will. And so he grows reserved at first, and he keeps so for a while; for it feels to him, as though his nature were something strange; because he does not easily believe that what is peculiar in him, is his goodness. Almost always it has been through a sorrowful youth, that great souls have entered on a glorious manhood. To be full of reverence, and yet to feel none for many that are in places of reverence; to be love itself, and to have others mistake his great affection for a weakness, which they may safely impose on; to be nobly minded towards men, only to be reckoned by them deficient in that prudence, which is mere cunning; to be pure in heart, and to be fancied on that very account, wanting in

common sense ; to be obliged to keep his better self to himself, even amongst his acquaintances, and so to be more lonely amongst them, than even in his own chamber ; these are experiences, which almost always sadden the earlier years of one, that is tender of heart, as well as great in mind. Very sad it must be, to get used to the company of men as they are, for one, who is a saint, but does not know it.

The early reserve of Channing was from the very strength of his feelings. And his youthful sadness was only the grey morning, out of which he was himself to shine on the world, so clearly and brightly, and cheerfully.

Very uncommon is the extent, to which he was independent of men, events, and circumstances. What he became was not much through what books he read, what society he was in, what opinions he learned, as a boy, or what events happened to him. This is what can be said of very few persons. Even some of the most honoured minds are but like edifices, that stand nobly indeed, but which have been built out of the woods and quarries nighest ; and that look venerable, but which have been colored so, only by the atmosphere, by the sunshine and the storms of their times. And with most men, their minds are an agglomeration of facts, they have known of, and of inconsistent opinions,

they have been told of. Their minds have grown, like commemorative mounds in Arabia, on to which, every traveller throws a stone, as he passes by. But Channing's mind was like some mountain of old time, that was heaved up, from within, by forces of its own, more and more sublimely above the earth; and that grew green of itself with vines and olives, and higher up with oaks and firs. In perusing the biography of Channing,\* the reader feels so strangely, that it is the record of a soul, which grew mysteriously from within.

Not that there were no outward circumstances, or authors, or events, influential on the mind of Channing: for there must have been not a few; and some he has himself mentioned.

When a little boy, he was present at the Convention, at which the inhabitants of Rhode Island, agreed to the Federal Constitution; and he heard his father address the meeting, in the character of Attorney-General; and long afterwards, he said, the enthusiasm of that time, he should never forget.

When he was thirteen, and at school, his father died. This must have been a great event for Channing, and a mournful one, for a long while. And for years afterwards, thoughts of

\* *Memoirs of William Ellery Channing*: edited by his nephew, William Henry Channing. London, Chapman.

the past, must have come over him solemnly, and like a breeze out of a church-yard, from among tombs and yew-trees.

It was while reading a work of Francis Hutcheson's, that Channing first felt what it is to be a soul, free and freely choosing the right. And he said that Dr. Richard Price's Dissertations, were what kept him a spiritualist in philosophy, when he was a student.

However, these books would not have been much to him, but for the free spirit of his birth-place. Very important is the spirit, which a thinker grows up in. And just as Newton learned the way of the stars from seeing an apple fall; so it is possible that almost every spiritual principle may be grandly argued from any one of a hundred very common books.

Six years before Channing died, he preached a sermon at the dedication of a Church in Rhode Island, at Newport, his native town. And in it he spoke of the great and beautiful impressions, which came upon him, from the scenery of his native island, and which had been no little influential in determining his modes of thought and habits of life. He said, no spot on earth had helped him so much as the beech, down to which, when he was a youth, he used to go, in the sunshine, and in tempests; and where with prayers and thanksgiving, a great work



went on in his soul; aided sometimes by the beauty, that softened his heart, and sometimes by the storms, that awed him with the power of God.

But for Channing, the freedom of the island, was perhaps a much happier thing than the beauty of it. The Commonwealth there, was of Roger Williams' settling, religiously free from the beginning, and generously as well as resolutely free. Its founder was one who loved liberty quite as dearly, and much more wisely than the other pilgrim fathers; and he was a man of the largest love, and the greatest patience. He was a minister at Salem; and for many years, he was the object of bitter persecution, by neighbouring ministers: and he was driven out, among the Indians, one winter. But at last he founded a colony of his own, and for it, he made such laws, as he thought were right. And in the peace, and happiness, and dear liberty of this Settlement, it was a delight to the governor of it, to think of his early troubles, and to write about himself, at last, as he did—

Lost many a time, I've had no guide,  
No house but hollow tree,  
In stormy, winter night, no fire,  
No food, no company.

It was in Roger Williams' Commonwealth, and under laws of his framing, and so in his

spirit very much, that Channing grew up. And in this he was fortunate; for had he been a bigot, he would not have felt the beauty of his birth-place much, nor the glory of the worship made by winds and waves for man to join in. It was because he was so free in spirit, that beauty was such a delight and virtuous help to him, as it was. It was soon after maintaining that freedom is of the very essence of human nature, that he said himself at Newport "I thank God that this beautiful island was the place of my birth."

There was not anything very special either in the accidents or the circumstances of his life; nor was there in the early promise of his genius, nor even in his very earliest writings. His character is not to be accounted for, either from his parents, his studies, or his time and place in the world. Wonderful is it? So it is, and very rightly: for it is a message from God; and the very mystery of it, should draw towards it our reverent attention. In this spirit, let the noble memoir of Channing be studied, and the reader will be the wiser for it, and not the worse. For there is a curiosity, which reads the life of a great man, like gossip about him, and which discovers that he could not have been otherwise than the poet, or the philoso-



pher, or the philanthropist he was, on account of his disposition as a boy, and the opportunities which he had as a man.

An acorn will not open and become a seedling, and grow to be a shady tree, without God: nor will a soul, out of nothingness, grow to be wise, and good, and wondrous, without much more than what the eye can see, or the ready tongue well explain. In at the ears enter sounds, and in at the eyes enter sights, for a man; but into his mind, there are other inlets than his eyes and ears; for man is soul as well as body; and he is a child, with God for a father. And so into his mind, there enter helps, which are invisible and inaudible, but not therefore the less real. And of every man's history, the most important part, is what no fellow-creature but only some angel could write. Always let this be remembered; and the narrative of a life will not interest the less, and will profit the more.

There is a God about us, drawing the nigher us, for every holy thought of ours. And it was the same with Channing. And by gladly recognizing the way of his spiritual growth, we shall ourselves grow the more freely.

Many are the men, who are the better loved for being the better known; but they are few indeed, who can be the more highly esteemed,

as well as the more tenderly loved, for being thoroughly known: but of these very few Channing is one. A man good as well as great, is a blessing to all who know him, for their souls are the larger for sympathy with his soul. And from perusing the life of Channing, the reader feels enlarged in soul, and for some while at least, walks about, as though in a new spirit.

The Memoirs of Channing make an emphasis on almost every sentence of his writings. His arguments for liberty are the holier, for the sacred way he respected the freedom of others. His exhortations to goodness are the more persuasive for his own more remarkable virtues, his humility, patience, kindness, and godly courage. It was because he himself lived so familiarly in the thought of immortality, that in his writings there is to be tasted a something of the powers of the world to come. He lived so religiously, was so simply and sweetly religious, that simply to know of the life which he lived, is religious refreshment and almost renewal.

His health was always so ill, and for a long time, there were so many prejudices against him, and so many bigotted oppositions, that in it all, his life was a great achievement. Sometimes he felt as though he were doing very little in the

world; but the life, which he was living, when become history, was itself to be peculiarly useful. By work and meditation, by prayer and by the spirit that came to him in answer, he grew to be what he was. And now his simple name is a nobler thing than even the books themselves of most other writers.

**BEAUTIES OF CHANNING.**

## THE PURPOSE OF POETRY.

By those who are accustomed to speak of poetry as light reading, Milton's eminence in this sphere may be considered only as giving him a high rank amongst the contributors to public amusement. Not so thought Milton. Of all God's gifts of intellect, he esteemed poetical genius the most transcendent. He esteemed it in himself as a kind of inspiration, and wrote his great works with something of the conscious dignity of a prophet. We agree with Milton in his estimate of poetry. It seems to us the divinest of all arts; for it is the breathing or expression of that principle or sentiment, which is deepest and sublimest in human nature; we mean, of that thirst or aspiration, to which no mind is wholly a stranger, for something purer and lovelier, something more powerful, lofty, and thrilling than ordinary and real life affords.

In an intellectual nature, framed for progress and for higher modes of being, there must be creative energies, powers of original and ever-growing thought; and poetry is the form in which these energies are chiefly manifested. It is the glorious prerogative of this art, that it "makes all things new" for the gratification of a divine instinct. It indeed finds its elements in what it actually sees and experiences, in the worlds of matter and mind; but it combines and blends these into new forms and according to new affinities; breaks down, if we may so say, the distinctions and bounds of nature; imparts to material objects life, and sentiment, and emotion, and invests the mind with the powers and splendours of the outward creation; describes the surrounding universe in the colours which the passions throw over it, and

depicts the soul in those modes of repose or agitation, of tenderness or sublime emotion, which manifest its thirst for a more powerful and joyful existence. To a man of a literal and prosaic character, the mind may seem lawless in these workings; but it observes higher laws than it transgresses, the laws of the immortal intellect; it is trying and developing its best faculties; and in the objects which it describes, or in the emotions which it awakens, anticipates those states of progressive power, splendour, beauty, and happiness, for which it was created.

It delights in the beauty and sublimity of the outward creation and of the soul. It indeed portrays, with terrible energy, the excesses of the passions; but they are passions which show a mighty nature, which are full of power, which command awe, and excite a deep though shuddering sympathy. Its great tendency and purpose is to carry the mind above and beyond the beaten, dusty, weary walks of ordinary life; to lift it into a purer element; and to breathe into it more profound and generous emotion. It reveals to us the loveliness of nature, brings back the freshness of early feeling, revives the relish of simple pleasures, keeps unquenched the enthusiasm which warmed the spring-time of our being, refines youthful love, strengthens our interest in human nature by vivid delineations of its tenderest and loftiest feelings, spreads our sympathies over all classes of society, knits us by new ties with universal being, and, through the brightness of its prophetic visions, helps faith to lay hold on the future life.

## MILTON'S LOVE OF LIBERTY.

We see Milton's greatness of mind in his fervent and constant attachment to liberty. Freedom, in all its forms and branches, was dear to him, but especially freedom of thought and speech, of conscience and worship, freedom to seek, profess, and propagate truth. The liberty of ordinary politicians, which protects men's outward rights, and removes restraints from the pursuit of property and outward good, fell very short of that for which Milton lived, and was ready to die. The tyranny which he hated most, was that which broke the intellectual and moral power of the community. The worst feature of the institutions which he assailed, was, that they fettered the mind. He felt within himself that the human mind had a principle of perpetual growth, that it was essentially diffusive and made for progress, and he wished every chain broken, that it might run the race of truth and virtue with increasing ardour and success. This attachment to a spiritual and refined freedom, which never forsook him in the hottest controversies, contributed greatly to protect his genius, imagination, taste, and sensibility, from the withering and polluting influences of public station, and of the rage of parties. It threw a hue of poetry over politics, and gave a sublime reference to his service of the commonwealth. The fact that Milton, in that stormy day, and amidst the trials of public office, kept his high faculties undepraved, was a proof of no common greatness. Politics, however they make the intellect active, sagacious and inventive, within a certain sphere, generally extinguish its thirst for universal truth, paralyse sentiment and imagination, corrupt the



simplicity of the mind, destroy that confidence in human virtue which lies at the foundation of philanthropy and generous sacrifices, and end in cold and prudent selfishness. Milton passed through a revolution, which, in its last stages and issue, was peculiarly fitted to damp enthusiasm, to scatter the visions of hope, and to infuse doubts of the reality of virtuous principle; and yet the ardour and moral feeling, and enthusiasm of his youth, came forth unhurt, and even exalted from the trial.

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MILTON IN HIS OLD AGE.

We see Milton's magnanimity in the circumstances under which "Paradise Lost" was written. It was not in prosperity, in honour, and amidst triumphs, but in disappointment, desertion, and in what the world calls disgrace, that he composed that work. The cause with which he had identified himself, had failed. His friends were scattered; liberty was trodden under foot; and her devoted champion was a by-word among the triumphant royalists. But it is the prerogative of true greatness to glorify itself in adversity, and to meditate and execute vast enterprises in defeat. Milton, fallen in outward condition, afflicted with blindness, disappointed in his best hopes, applied himself with characteristic energy to the sublimest achievement of intellect, solacing himself with great thoughts, with splendid creations, and with a prophetic confidence, that however neglected in his own age, he was framing in his works a bond of union and fellowship with the illustrious spirits of a brighter day. We delight to contemplate him in his retreat and last years. To the passing

spectator he seemed fallen and forsaken, and his blindness was reproached as a judgment from God. But though sightless, he lived in light. His inward eye ranged through universal nature, and his imagination shed on it brighter beams than the sun. Heaven, and hell, and paradise, were open to him. He visited past ages, and gathered round him ancient sages and heroes, prophets and apostles, brave knights and gifted bards. As he looked forward, ages of liberty dawned and rose to his view, and he felt that he was about to bequeath to them an inheritance of genius, "which would not fade away," and was to live in the memory, reverence, and love of remotest generations.

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## FENELON.

Fenelon, if not a profound, was an original thinker, and though a Catholic, he was essentially free. He wrote from his own mind, and seldom has a purer mind tabernacled in flesh. He professed to believe in an infallible church; but he listened habitually to the voice of God within him, and speaks of this in language so strong, as to have given the Quakers some plea for ranking him among themselves. So little did he confine himself to established notions, that he drew upon himself the censures of his church, and, like some other Christians whom we could name, has even been charged with a refined Deism. His works have the great charm of coming fresh from the soul. He wrote from experience, and hence, although he often speaks in a language which must seem almost a foreign one to men of the world, yet he always speaks in a tone of reality. That he has excesses, we

mean not to deny ; but they are of a kind which we regard with more than indulgence, almost with admiration. Common fanaticism we cannot away with ; for it is essentially vulgar, the working of animal passions, sometimes of sexual love, and oftener of earthly ambition. But when a pure mind errs, by aspiring after a disinterestedness and purity not granted to our present infant state, we almost reverence its errors ; and still more, we recognize in them an essential truth. They only anticipate and claim too speedily the good for which man was made. They are the misapprehensions of the inspired prophet, who hopes to see in his own day, what he was appointed to promise to remoter ages.

Fenelon saw far into the human heart, and especially into the lurkings of self-love. He looked with a piercing eye through the disguises of sin. But he knew sin, not as most men do, by bitter experience of its power, so much as by his knowledge and experience of virtue. Deformity was revealed to him by his refined perceptions and intense love of moral beauty. The light which he carried with him into the dark corners of the human heart, and by which he laid open its most hidden guilt, was that of celestial goodness. Hence, though the severest of censors, he is the most pitying. Not a tone of asperity escapes him. He looks on human error with an angel's tenderness, with tears which an angel might shed, and thus reconciles and binds us to our race, at the very moment of revealing its corruptions.

That Fenelon's views of human nature were dark, too dark, we learn from almost every page of his writings ; and at this we cannot wonder.

He was early thrown into the very court from which Rochefoucauld drew his celebrated Maxims, perhaps the spot, above all others on the face of the earth, distinguished and disgraced by selfishness, hypocrisy, and intrigue. When we think of Fenelon in the palace of Louis XIV. it reminds us of a seraph sent on a divine commission into the abodes of the lost; and when we recollect that in that atmosphere he composed his *Telemachus*, we doubt whether the records of the world furnish stronger evidence of the power of a divine virtue, to turn temptation into glory and strength, and to make even crowned and prosperous vice a means of triumph and exaltation.

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JOHNSON AND MILTON.

Johnson did not, and could not, appreciate Milton. We doubt whether two other minds, having so little in common as those of which we are now speaking, can be found in the higher walks of literature. Johnson was great in his own sphere, but that sphere was comparatively "of the earth," whilst Milton's was only inferior to that of angels. It was customary in the day of Johnson's glory, to call him a giant, to class him with a mighty, but still an earth-born race. Milton we should rank among seraphs. Johnson's mind acted chiefly on man's actual condition, on the realities of life, on the springs of human action, on the passions which now agitate society, and he seems hardly to have dreamed of a higher state of the human mind than was then exhibited. Milton, on the other hand, burned with a deep, yet calm love of moral grandeur and celestial purity. He thought, not so much of

what man is, as of what he might become. His own mind was a revelation to him of a higher condition of humanity, and to promote this he thirsted and toiled for freedom, as the element for the growth and improvement of his nature. In religion, Johnson was gloomy and inclined to superstition, and on the subject of government leaned towards absolute power; and the idea of reforming either, never entered his mind but to disturb and provoke it. The church and the civil polity under which he lived, seemed to him perfect, unless he may have thought that the former would be improved by a larger infusion of Romish rites and doctrines, and the latter by an enlargement of the royal prerogative. Hence, a tame acquiescence in the present forms of religion and government, marks his works. Hence, we find so little in his writings which is electric, and soul-kindling, and which gives the reader a consciousness of being made for a state of loftier thought and feeling than the present. Milton's whole soul, on the contrary, revolted against the maxims of legitimaey, hereditary faith, and servile reverence for established power. He could not brook the bondage to which men had bowed for ages. "Reformation" was the first word of public warning which broke from his youthful lips, and the hope of it was the solace of his declining years. The difference between Milton and Johnson may be traced not only in these great features of mind, but in their whole characters. Milton was refined and spiritual in his habits, temperate almost to abstemiousness, and refreshed himself after intellectual effort by music. Johnson inclined to more sensual delights. Milton was exquisitely alive to the outward



creation, to sounds, motions, and forms, to natural beauty and grandeur. Johnson, through defect of physical organization, if not through deeper deficiency, had little susceptibility of these pure and delicate pleasures, and would not have exchanged the Strand for the vale of Tempe or the gardens of the Hesperides. How could Johnson be just to Milton! The comparison which we have instituted, has compelled us to notice Johnson's defects. But we trust we are not blind to his merits. His stately march, his pomp and power of language, his strength of thought, his reverence for virtue and religion, his vigorous logic, his practical wisdom, his insight into the springs of human action, and the solemn pathos which occasionally pervades his descriptions of life, and his references to his own history, command our willing admiration. That he wanted enthusiasm and creative imagination and lofty sentiment, was not his fault. We do not blame him for not being Milton. We love intellectual power in all its forms, and delight in the variety of mind. We blame him only that his passions, prejudices, and bigotry, engaged him in the unworthy task of obscuring the brighter glory of one of the most gifted and virtuous men.

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#### AN ESTIMATE OF BONAPARTE'S GREATNESS.

There are different orders of greatness. Among these, the first rank is unquestionably due to *moral* greatness, or magnanimity; to that sublime energy, by which the soul, smitten with the love of virtue, binds itself indissolubly, for life and for death, to truth and duty; espouses as its own the interests of human nature; scorns all mean-

ness and defies all peril; hears in its own conscience a voice louder than threatenings and thunders; withstands all the powers of the universe, which would sever it from the cause of freedom and religion; reposes an unfaltering trust in God in the darkest hour, and is "ever ready to be offered up" on the altar of its country or of mankind. Of this moral greatness, which throws all other forms of greatness into obscurity, we see not a trace in Napoleon. Though clothed with the power of a god, the thought of consecrating himself to the introduction of a new and higher era, to the exaltation of the character and condition of his race, seems never to have dawned on his mind. The spirit of disinterestedness and self-sacrifice seems not to have waged a moment's war with self-will and ambition. His ruling passions, indeed, were singularly at variance with magnanimity. Moral greatness has too much simplicity, is too unostentatious, too self-subsistent, and enters into others' interests with too much heartiness, to live an hour for what Napoleon always lived, to make itself the theme, and gaze, and wonder of a dazzled world. Next to moral comes *intellectual* greatness, or genius in the highest sense of that word; and by this, we mean that sublime capacity of thought, through which the soul, smitten with the love of the true and the beautiful, essays to comprehend the universe, soars into the heavens, penetrates the earth, penetrates itself, questions the past, anticipates the future, traces out the general and all-comprehending laws of nature, binds together by innumerable affinities and relations all the objects of its knowledge, rises from the finite and transient to the infinite



and the everlasting, frames to itself from its own fulness lovelier and sublimer forms than it beholds, discerns the harmonies between the world within and the world without us, and finds in every region of the universe types and interpreters of its own deep mysteries and glorious inspirations. This is the greatness which belongs to philosophers, and to the master spirits in poetry and the fine arts. Next comes the greatness of *action*: and by this we mean the sublime power of conceiving bold and extensive plans; of constructing and bringing to bear on a mighty object a complicated machinery of means, energies and arrangements, and of accomplishing great outward effects. To this head belongs the greatness of Bonaparte, and that he possessed it, we need not prove, and none will be hardy enough to deny.

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WORDSWORTH, SCOTT, AND DICKENS.

The works of genius of our age breathe a spirit of universal sympathy. The great poet of our times, Wordsworth, one of the few who are to live, has gone to common life, to the feelings of our universal nature, to the obscure and neglected portions of society, for beautiful and touching themes. Nor ought it to be said, that he has shed over these the charms of his genius; as if in themselves they had nothing grand or lovely. Genius is not a creator, in the sense of fancying or feigning what does not exist. Its distinction is, to discern more of truth than common minds. It sees, under disguises and humble forms, everlasting beauty. This it is the prerogative of Wordsworth to discern and reveal in the ordinary walks of life, in the common human heart. He

has revealed the loveliness of the primitive feelings, of the universal affections of the human soul. The grand truth which pervades his poetry is, that the beautiful is not confined to the rare, the new, the distant, to scenery and modes of life open only to the few; but that it is poured forth profusely on the common earth and sky; that it gleams from the loneliest flower, that it lights up the humblest sphere, that the sweetest affections lodge in lowly hearts, that there is sacredness, dignity and loveliness in lives which few eyes rest on, that even in the absence of all intellectual culture, the domestic relations can quietly nourish that disinterestedness which is the element of all greatness, and without which intellectual power is a splendid deformity. Wordsworth is the poet of humanity; he teaches reverence for our universal nature; he breaks down the factitious barriers between human hearts.

The same is true, in an inferior degree, of Scott, whose tastes however were more aristocratic. Scott had a childish love of rank, titles, show, pageants, and in general looked with keener eye on the outward life than into the soul. Still he had a human heart and sympathised with his race. With few exceptions, he was just to all his human brethren. A reconciling spirit breathes through his writings. He seizes on the interesting and beautiful features in all conditions of life; gives us bursts of tender and noble feelings even from ruder natures; and continually knits some new tie between the reader and the vast varieties of human nature which start up under his teeming pen. He delighted, indeed, in Highland chiefs, in border thieves and mur-

derers, in fierce men and fierce encounters. But he had an eye to catch the stream of sweet affections, as it wound its way through humble life. What light has Jeanie Deans shed on the path of the obscure! He was too wanting in the religious sentiment, to comprehend the solemn bearing, the stern grandeur of the Puritans. But we must not charge with narrowness, a writer, who embodied in a Jewish maiden his highest conceptions of female nobleness.

Another writer, illustrating the liberalising, all-harmonising tendency of our times, is Dickens, whose genius has sought and found subjects of thrilling interest in the passions, sufferings, virtues of the mass of the people. He shows, that life in its rudest forms may wear a tragic grandeur; that amidst follies and sensual excesses, provoking laughter or scorn, the moral feelings do not wholly die; and that the haunts of the blackest crimes are sometimes lighted up by the presence and influence of the noblest souls. He has indeed greatly erred, in turning so often the degradation of humanity into matter of sport; but the tendency of his dark pictures is to awaken sympathy with our race, to change the unfeeling indifference which has prevailed towards the depressed multitude, into sorrowful and indignant sensibility to their wrongs and woes.

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#### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

The French Revolution is perpetually sounded in our ears, as a warning against the lawlessness of the people. But whence came this revolution? Who were the regicides? Who beheaded Louis XVI? You tell me the Jacobins; but history

tells a different tale. I will show you the beheaders of Louis XVI. They were Louis XIV. and the Regent who followed him, and Louis the XV. These brought their descendant to the guillotine. The priesthood, who revoked the Edict of Nantz, and drove from France the skill, and industry, and virtue, and piety, which were the sinews of her strength; the statesmen who intoxicated Louis XIV. with the scheme of universal empire; the profligate, prodigal, shameless Orleans; and the still more brutalized Louis the XV. with his court of panders and prostitutes; these made the nation bankrupt, broke asunder the bond of loyalty, and overwhelmed the throne and altar in ruins. We hear of the horrors of the revolution; but in this, as in other things, we recollect the effect, without thinking of the guiltier cause. The revolution was indeed a scene of horror; but when I look back on the reigns which preceded it, and which made Paris almost one great stew and gaming-house, and when I see altar and throne desecrated by a licentiousness unsurpassed in any former age, I look on scenes as shocking to the calm and searching eye of reason and virtue, as the 10th of August and the massacres of September. Bloodshed is indeed a terrible spectacle; but there are other things almost as fearful as blood. There are crimes that do not make us start and turn pale like the guillotine, but are deadlier in their workings. God forbid that I should say a word to weaken the thrill of horror with which we contemplate the outrages of the French Revolution. But when I hear that revolution quoted to frighten us from reform, to show us the danger of lifting up the depressed and igno-

rant mass, I must ask whence it came? and the answer is, that it came from the intolerable weight of misgovernment and tyranny, from the utter want of culture among the mass of the people, and from a corruption of the great, too deep to be purged away except by destruction. I am also compelled to remember, that the people, in this their singular madness, wrought far less wo than kings and priests have wrought, as a familiar thing, in all ages of the world. All the murders of the French Revolution did not amount, I think, by one-fifth, to those of the "Massacre of St. Bartholomew." The priesthood and the throne, in one short night and day, shed more blood, and that the best blood of France, than was spilled by Jacobinism, and all other forms of violence, during the whole revolution. Even the atheism and infidelity of France were due chiefly to a licentious priesthood and a licentious court. It was religion, so called, that dug her own grave.

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#### RELIGION AND LITERATURE.

Our chief hopes of an improved literature, rest on our hopes of an improved religion. From the prevalent theology, which has come down to us from the dark ages, we hope nothing. It has done its best. All that can grow up under its sad shade, has already been brought forth. It wraps the Divine nature and human nature in impenetrable gloom. It overlays Christianity with technical, arbitrary dogmas. True faith is of another lineage. It comes from the same source with reason, conscience, and our best affections, and is in harmony with them all. True faith is essentially a moral conviction; a



confidence in the reality and immutableness of moral distinctions; a confidence in disinterested virtue or in spiritual excellence as the supreme good; a confidence in God as its fountain and almighty friend, and in Jesus Christ as having lived and died to breathe it into the soul; a confidence in its power, triumphs, and immortality; a confidence, through which outward changes, obstructions, disasters, sufferings, are overcome, or rather made instruments of perfection. Such a faith, unfolded freely and powerfully, must "work mightily" on the intellect as well as on the practice. By revealing to us the supreme purpose of the Creator, it places us, as it were, in the centre of the universe, from which the harmonies, true relations, and brightest aspects of things are discerned. It unites calmness and enthusiasm, and the concord of these seemingly hostile elements is essential to the full and healthy action of the creative powers of the soul. It opens the eye to beauty and the heart to love. Literature, under this influence, will become more ingenuous and single-hearted; will penetrate farther into the soul; will find new interpretations of nature and life; will breathe a martyr's love of truth, tempered with a never failing charity; and, whilst sympathising with all human suffering, will still be pervaded by a healthful cheerfulness, and will often break forth in tones of irrepressible joy, responsive to that happiness which fills God's universe.

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#### FAITH THE ASSISTANT OF SCIENCE.

The great principles of moral and religious science, are above all others, fruitful, life-giving, and have intimate connexions with all other

truths. The Love towards God and man, which is the centre in which they meet, is the very spirit of research into nature. It finds perpetual delight in tracing out the harmonies and vast and beneficial arrangements of creation, and inspires an interest in the works of the Universal Father, more profound, intense, enduring, than philosophical curiosity. I conceive, too, that faith in moral and religious truth, has strong affinities with the scientific spirit, and thus contributes to its perfection. Both, for example, have the same objects, that is, universal truths. As another coincidence, I would observe, that it is the highest prerogative of scientific genius, to interpret obscure signs, to dart from faint hints to sublime discoveries, to read in a few fragments the history of vanished worlds and ages, to detect in the falling apple the law that rules the spheres. Now it is the property of moral and religious faith, to see in the finite the manifestation of the Infinite, in the present the germ of the boundless future, in the visible the traces of the Incomprehensible Unseen, in the powers and wants of the soul, its imperishable destiny. Such is the harmony between the religious and the philosophical spirit. It is to a higher moral and religious culture, that I look for a higher interpretation of nature. The laws of nature, we must remember, had their origin in the mind of God. Of this they are the product, expression, and type; and I cannot but believe, that the human mind which best understands, and which partakes most largely of the divine, has a power of interpreting nature, which is accorded to no other. It has harmonies with the system which it is to unfold. It contains in itself the principles which



gave birth to creation. As yet, science has hardly penetrated beneath the surface of nature. The principles of animal and vegetable life, of which all organized beings around us are but varied modifications, the forces which pervade or constitute matter, and the links between matter and mind, are as yet wrapped in darkness; and how little is known of the adaptations of the physical and the spiritual world to one another! Whence is light to break in on these depths of creative wisdom? I look for it to the spirit of philosophy, baptized, hallowed, exalted, made piercing by a new culture of the moral and religious principles of the human soul.

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#### MILITARY TALENT.

Military talent, even of the highest order, is far from holding the first place among intellectual endowments. It is one of the lower forms of genius; for it is not conversant with the highest and richest objects of thought. We grant that a mind, which takes in a wide country at a glance, and understands, almost by intuition, the positions it affords for a successful campaign, is a comprehensive and vigorous one. The general who disposes his forces so as to counteract a greater force; who supplies by skill, science, and invention, the want of numbers; who dives into the counsels of his enemy, and who gives unity, energy, and success to a vast variety of operations, in the midst of casualties and obstructions which no wisdom could foresee, manifests great power. But still the chief work of a general is to apply physical force; to remove physical obstructions; to avail himself of physical aids and advantages; to act on matter; to overcome rivers, ramparts,

mountains, and human muscles; and these are not the highest objects of mind, nor do they demand intelligence of the highest order; and, accordingly, nothing is more common than to find men eminent in this department, who are wanting in the noblest energies of the soul, in habits of profound and liberal thinking, in imagination and taste, in the capacity of enjoying works of genius, and in large and original views of human nature and society. The office of a great general does not differ widely from that of a great mechanician, whose business it is to frame new combinations of physical forces, to adapt them to new circumstances, and to remove new obstructions. Accordingly, great generals, away from the camp, are often no greater men than the mechanician taken from his workshop.

To institute a comparison in point of talent and genius between such men and Milton, Bacon, and Shakspeare, is almost an insult on these illustrious names. Who can think of these truly great intelligences; of the range of their minds through heaven and earth; of their deep intuition into the soul; of their new and glowing combinations of thought; of the energy with which they grasped and subjected to their main purpose the infinite materials of illustration which nature and life afford—who can think of the forms of transcendent beauty and grandeur which they created, or which were rather emanations of their own minds; of the calm wisdom and fervid imagination which they conjoined; of the voice of power, in which, “though dead, they still speak,” and awaken intellect, sensibility, and genius in both hemispheres—who can think of such men, and not feel the immense inferiority

of the most gifted warrior, whose elements of thought are physical forces and physical obstructions, and whose employment is the combination of the lowest class of objects on which a powerful mind can be employed.

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#### BOOKS.

In the best books, great men talk to us, give us their most precious thoughts, and pour their souls into ours. God be thanked for books! They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Books are the true levellers. They give to all, who will faithfully use them, the society, the spiritual presence of the best and greatest of our race. No matter how poor I am. No matter though the prosperous of my own time will not enter my obscure dwelling. If the Sacred Writers will enter and take up their abode under my roof, if Milton will cross my threshold to sing to me of Paradise, and Shakspeare to open to me the worlds of imagination and the workings of the human heart, and Franklin to enrich me with his practical wisdom, I shall not pine for want of intellectual companionship, and I may become a cultivated man, though excluded from what is called the best society in the place where I live.

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#### THE PRESENT AGE.

In these brief words, what a world of thought is comprehended! what infinite movements! what joys and sorrows! what hope and despair! what faith and doubt! what silent grief and loud lament! what fierce conflicts and subtle schemes of policy! what private and public revolutions!

In the period through which many of us have passed, what thrones have been shaken! What hearts have bled! What millions have been butchered by their fellow-creatures! What hopes of philanthropy have been blighted! And at the same time, what magnificent enterprises have been achieved! What new provinces won to science and art! What rights and liberties secured to nations! It is a privilege to have lived in an age so stirring, so pregnant, so eventful. It is an age never to be forgotten. Its voice of warning and encouragement is never to die. Its impression on history is indelible. Amidst its events, the American Revolution, the first distinct, solemn assertion of the Rights of Men, and the French Revolution, that volcanic force which shook the earth to its centre, are never to pass from men's minds. Over this age, the night will indeed gather more, as time rolls away; but in that night two forms will appear, Washington and Napoleon, the one a lurid meteor, the other a benign, serene, and undecaying star. Another American name will live in history, your Franklin; and the kite, which brought lightning from heaven, will be seen sailing in the clouds by remote posterity, when the city where he dwelt may be known only by its ruins. There is however, something greater in the age than its greatest men; it is the appearance of a new power in the world, the appearance of the multitude of men on that stage, where as yet the few have acted their parts alone. This influence is to endure to the end of time. What more of the present is to survive? Perhaps much, of which we now take no note. The glory of an age is often hid from itself. Perhaps some word has been spoken

in our day, which we have not deigned to hear, but which is to grow clearer and louder through all ages. Perhaps some silent thinker among us is at work in his closet, whose name is to fill the earth. Perhaps there sleeps in his cradle some Reformer, who is to move the church and the world, who is to open a new era in history, who is to fire the human soul with new hope and new daring. What else is to survive the age? That, which the age has little thought of, but which is living in us all; I mean the soul, the Immortal Spirit. Of this all ages are the unfoldings, and it is greater than all. We must not feel in the contemplation of the vast movements of our own and former times, as if we ourselves were nothing. I repeat it, we are greater than all. We are to survive our age, to comprehend it, and to pronounce its sentence. As yet, however, we are encompassed with darkness. The issues of our time how obscure! The future into which it opens, who of us can foresee? To the Father of all Ages I commit this future, with humble yet courageous and unfaltering hope.

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#### HUMAN RIGHTS.

Man has rights by nature. The disposition of some to deride abstract rights, as if all rights were uncertain, mutable, and conceded by society, shows a lamentable ignorance of human nature. Whoever understands this must see in it an immoveable foundation of rights. These are gifts of the Creator, bound up indissolubly with our moral constitution. In the order of things, they precede society, lie at its foundation, constitute man's capacity for it, and are the great objects of social institutions. The consciousness of rights



is not a creation of human art, a conventional sentiment, but essential to and inseparable from the human soul.

Man's rights belong to him as a Moral Being, as capable of perceiving moral distinctions, as a subject of moral obligation. As soon as he becomes conscious of Duty, a kindred consciousness springs up that he has a Right to do what the sense of duty enjoins, and that no foreign will or power can obstruct his moral action without crime. He feels that the sense of duty was given to him as a Law, that it makes him responsible for himself, that to exercise, unfold, and obey it is the end of his being, and that he has a right to exercise and obey it without hindrance or opposition. A consciousness of dignity, however obscure, belongs also to this divine principle; and though he may want words to do justice to his thoughts, he feels that he has that within him which makes him essentially equal to all around him.

The sense of duty is the fountain of human rights. In other words, the same inward principle, which teaches the former, bears witness to the latter. Duties and Rights must stand or fall together. It has been too common to oppose them to one another; but they are indissolubly joined together. That same inward principle, which teaches a man what he is bound to do to others, teaches equally, and at the same instant, what others are bound to do to *him*. That same voice, which forbids him to injure a single fellow-creature, forbids every fellow-creature to do *him* harm. His conscience, in revealing the moral law, does not reveal a law for himself only, but speaks as a Universal Legislator. He has an

intuitive conviction, that the obligations of this divine code press on others as truly as on himself. That principle, which teaches him that he sustains the relation of brotherhood to all human beings, teaches him that this relation is reciprocal, that it gives indestructible claims as well as imposes solemn duties, and that what he owes to the members of this vast family, they owe to him in return. Thus the moral nature involves rights. These enter into its very essence. They are taught by the very voice which enjoins duty. Accordingly there is no deeper principle in human nature than the consciousness of rights. So profound, so ineradicable is this sentiment, that the oppressions of ages have nowhere wholly stifled it.

Having shown the foundation of human rights in human nature, it may be asked what they are. Perhaps they do not admit very accurate definition any more than human duties; for the Spiritual cannot be weighed and measured like the Material. They may all be comprised in the right, which belongs to every rational being, to exercise his powers for the promotion of his own and others' Happiness and Virtue. These are the great purposes of his existence. For these his powers were given, and to these he is bound to devote them. He is bound to make himself and others better and happier, according to his ability. His ability for this work is a sacred trust from God, the greatest of all trusts.

Having considered the great fundamental right of human nature, particular rights may easily be deduced. Every man has a right to exercise and invigorate his intellect or the power of knowledge, for knowledge is the essential condi-



tion of successful effort for every good; and whoever obstructs or quenches the intellectual life in another inflicts a grievous and irreparable wrong. Every man has a right to enquire into his duty, and to conform himself to what he learns of it. Every man has a right to use the means, given by God and sanctioned by virtue, for bettering his condition. He has a right to be respected according to his moral worth; a right to be regarded as a member of the community to which he belongs, and to be protected by impartial laws; and a right to be exempted from coercion, stripes, and punishment, as long as he respects the rights of others. He has a right to an equivalent for his labour. He has a right to sustain domestic relations, to discharge their duties, and to enjoy the happiness which flows from fidelity in these and other domestic relations.

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#### MAN NOT THE CREATURE OF THE STATE.

Man is not the mere creature of the state. Man is older than nations, and he is to survive nations. There is a law of humanity more primitive and divine than the law of the land. He has higher claims than those of a citizen. He has rights which date before all charters and communities; not conventional, not repealable, but as eternal as the powers and laws of his being.

This annihilation of the individual, by merging him in the state, lies at the foundation of despotism. The nation is too often the grave of the man. This is the more monstrous, because the very end of the state, of the organization of the nation, is to secure the individual in all his

rights, and especially to secure the rights of the weak.

The individual is not made for the state, so much as the state for the individual. A man is not created for political relations as his highest end, but for indefinite spiritual progress, and is placed in political relations as the means of his progress. The human soul is greater, more sacred than the state, and must never be sacrificed to it. The human soul is to outlive all earthly institutions. The distinction of nations is to pass away. Thrones, which have stood for ages, are to meet the doom pronounced upon all man's works. But the individual mind survives, and the obscurest subject, if true to God, will rise to a power never wielded by earthly potentates.

A human being is a member of the community, not as a limb is a member of the body, or as a wheel is a part of a machine, intended only to contribute to some general, joint result. He was created, not to be merged in the whole, as a drop in the ocean, or as a particle of sand on the sea-shore, and to aid only in composing a mass. He is an ultimate being, made for his own perfection as his highest end, made to maintain an individual existence, and to serve others only as far as consists with his own virtue and progress.

A man, by his very nature, as an intelligent, moral creature of God, has claims to aid and kind regard from all other men. There is a grand law of humanity, more comprehensive than all others, and under which every man should find shelter. He has not only a right, but is bound to use freely and improve the powers

which God has given him; and other men, instead of obstructing, are bound to assist their development and exertion. These claims a man does not derive from the family or tribe in which he began his being. They are not the growth of a particular soil; they are not ripened under a peculiar sky; they are not written on a particular complexion; they belong to human nature. The ground on which one man asserts them, all men stand on, nor can they be denied to one without being denied to all. We have here a common interest. We must all stand or fall together. We all have claims on our race, claims of kindness and justice, claims grounded on our relation to our common Father and on the inheritance of a common nature.

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#### THE REAL USE OF GOVERNMENT.

Government is a great good, and essential to human happiness; but it does its good chiefly by a negative influence, by repressing injustice and crime, by securing property from invasion, and thus removing obstructions to the free exercise of human powers. It confers little positive benefit. Its office is, not to confer happiness, but to give men opportunity to work out happiness for themselves. Government resembles the wall which surrounds our lands; a needful protection, but rearing no harvests, ripening no fruits. It is the individual who must choose whether the enclosure shall be a paradise or a waste. How little positive good can government confer? It does not till our fields, build our houses, weave the ties which bind us to our families, give disinterestedness to the heart, or energy to the intellect and will. All our great

interests are left to ourselves; and governments, when they have interfered with them, have obstructed, much more than advanced them. For example, they have taken religion into their keeping only to disfigure it. So, education, in their hands, has generally become a propagator of servile maxims, and an upholder of antiquated errors. In like manner, they have paralysed trade by their nursing care, and multiplied poverty by expedients for its relief. Government has almost always been a barrier against which intellect has had to struggle; and society has made its chief progress by the minds of private individuals, who have outstripped their rulers, and gradually shamed them into truth and wisdom.

Laws may repress crime. Their office is to erect prisons for violence and fraud. But moral and religious worth, dignity of character, loftiness of sentiment, all that makes man a blessing to himself and society, lies beyond their province. Virtue is of the soul, where laws cannot penetrate. Excellence is something too refined, spiritual, celestial, to be produced by the coarse machinery of government. Human legislation addresses itself to self-love, and works by outward force. Its chief instrument is punishment. It cannot touch the springs of virtuous feelings, of great and good deeds. Accordingly, rulers, with all their imagined omnipotence, do not dream of enjoining by statute, philanthropy, gratitude, devout sentiment, magnanimity, and purity of thought. Virtue is too high a concern for government. It is an inspiration of God, not a creature of law; and the agents whom God chiefly honours in its promotion, are those who,

through experience, as well as meditation, have risen to generous conceptions of it, and who show it forth, not in empty eulogies, but in the language of deep conviction, and in lives of purity.

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#### THE SUPREME LAW OF A STATE.

The supreme law of a state is not its safety, its power, its prosperity, its affluence, the flourishing state of agriculture, commerce, and the arts. These objects constituting what is commonly called the Public Good, are, indeed, proposed, and ought to be proposed, in the constitution and administration of states. But there is a higher law, even Virtue, Rectitude, the voice of Conscience, the Will of God. Justice is a greater good than property, not greater in degree, but in kind. Universal benevolence is infinitely superior to prosperity. Religion, the love of God, is worth incomparably more than all his outward gifts. A community, to secure or aggrandize itself, must never forsake the Right, the Holy, the Just.

Moral Good, Rectitude in all its branches, is the Supreme Good; by which I do not intend that it is the surest means to the security and prosperity of the state. Such, indeed, it is, but this is too low a view. It must not be looked upon as a Means, an Instrument. It is the Supreme End, and states are bound to subject to it all their legislation, be the apparent loss of prosperity ever so great. National wealth is not the End. It derives all its worth from national virtue. If accumulated by rapacity, conquest, or any degrading means, or if concentrated in the hands of the few, whom it strengthens to crush the many, it is a curse. National wealth is a



blessing, only when it springs from and represents the intelligence, and virtue of the community, when it is a fruit and expression of good habits, of respect for the rights of all, of impartial and beneficent legislation, when it gives impulse to the higher faculties, and occasion and incitement to justice and beneficence. No greater calamity can befall a people than to prosper by crime. No success can be a compensation for the wound inflicted on a nation's mind by renouncing Right as its supreme Law.

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#### THE SUBJECT IN RELATION TO THE STATE.

What the government determines, the multitude of men are apt to think right. We do not exercise our moral judgment, because it has been forestalled by the constitution and by the laws. We are members of a community, and this relation triumphs over all others.

Now, the truth is, that no decision of the State absolves us from the moral law, from the authority of conscience. It is no excuse for our wrong-doing, that the artificial organization, called society, has done wrong. It is of the highest moment, that the prevalent notions of a man's relation to the State should be rectified. The idea of this relation is so exaggerated and perverted, as to impair the force of every other. A man's country is more thought of than his nature. His connexion with a particular community is more respected than his connexion with God. His alliance with his race is reduced to a nullity by his alliance with the State. He must be ready to give up his race, to sacrifice all its rights and interests, that the little spot where he was born, may triumph or prosper. The



history of nations is very much the history of the immolation of the individual to the country. His nationality stands out before all his other attributes. The nation, represented by one or a few individuals, has arrogated to itself the dignity of being the fountain of all his rights. It has made his religion for him. Its will, called law, has taken place of all other laws. It has seized on the individual as its tool, and doomed him to live and die for its most selfish purposes.

But the nation is not everything. The nation is not the fountain of right. Our first duties are not to our country. Our first allegiance is not due to its laws. We belong first to God, and next to our race. We were, indeed, made for partial, domestic, and national ties and affections, and these are essential means of our education and happiness, in this first stage of our being; but all these are to be kept in subjection to the laws of universal justice and humanity. They are intended to train us up to these. In these consists our likeness to the Divinity.

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#### LIBERTY IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT VIRTUE.

I know that it is supposed, that political wisdom can so form institutions, as to extract from them freedom, notwithstanding a people's sins. The chief expedient for this purpose has been, to balance, as it is called, men's passions and interests against each other, to use one man's selfishness as a check against his neighbour's, to produce peace by the counteraction and equilibrium of hostile forces. This whole theory I distrust.

There is no foundation for the vulgar doctrine, that a state may flourish by arts and crimes.

Nations and individuals are subjected to one law. The moral principle is the life of communities. No calamity can befall a people so great, as temporary success through a criminal policy, as the hope thus cherished of trampling with impunity on the authority of God. Sooner or later, insulted virtue avenges itself terribly on states as well as on private men. We hope, indeed, security and the quiet enjoyment of our wealth, from our laws and institutions. But civil laws find their chief sanction in the law written within by the finger of God. In proportion as a people enslave themselves to sin, the fountain of public justice becomes polluted. The most wholesome statutes, wanting the support of public opinion, grow impotent. Self-seekers, unprincipled men, by flattering bad passions, and by darkening the public mind, usurp the seat of judgment and places of power and trust, and turn free institutions into lifeless forms or instruments of oppression. I especially believe, that communities suffer sorely by that species of immorality which the herd of statesmen have industriously cherished as of signal utility, I mean, by hostile feeling towards other countries. The common doctrine has been, that prejudice and enmity towards foreign states, are means of fostering a national spirit, and of confirming union at home. But bad passions, once instilled into a people, will never exhaust themselves abroad. Vice never yields the fruits of virtue. Injustice to strangers does not breed justice to our friends. Malignity, in every form, is a fire of hell, and the policy which feeds it, is infernal. Domestic feuds and the madness of party, are its natural and necessary issues; and

a people hostile to others, will demonstrate in its history, that no form of inhumanity or injustice, escapes its just retribution.

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#### DEMOCRACY.

It is a common notion here, as elsewhere, that it is a grand privilege to govern, to exercise political power; and that popular institutions have this special benefit, that they confer the honor and pleasure of sovereignty on the greatest number possible. The people are pleased at the thoughts of being rulers; and hence all obstructions to their immediate, palpable ruling, are regarded with jealousy. It is a grand thing, they fancy, to have their share of kingship. Now this is wrong, a pernicious error. It is no privilege to govern, but a fearful responsibility, and seldom assumed without guilt. The great good to be sought and hoped from popular institutions is, to be freed from unnecessary rule, to be governed with no reference to the glory or gratification of the sovereign power. The grand good of popular institutions is Liberty, or the protection of every man's rights to the full, with the least possible restraint. Sovereignty, wherever lodged, is not a thing to be proud of, or to be stretched a hand's-breadth beyond need. If I am to be hedged in on every side, to be fretted by the perpetual presence of arbitrary will, to be denied the exercise of my powers, it matters nothing to me whether the chain is laid on me by one or many, by king or people. A despot is not more tolerable for his many heads.

Democracy, considered in itself, is the noblest form of government, and the only one to satisfy a man who respects himself and his fellow-

creatures. But if its actual operation be regarded, we are compelled to say that it works very imperfectly. It is true of people, as it is of king and nobles, that they have no great capacity of government. They ought not to exult at the thought of being rulers, but to content themselves with swaying the sceptre within as narrow limits as the public safety may require. They should tremble at this function of government, should exercise it with self-distrust, and be humbled by the defects of their administration.

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#### THE GRAND END OF SOCIETY.

Property continually tends to become a more vivid idea than right. In the struggle for private accumulation, the worth of every human being is overlooked. The importance of every man's progress is forgotten. We must contend for this great idea. They who hold it, must spread it around them. The truth must be sounded in the ears of men, that the grand end of society is to place within reach of all its members the means of improvement, of elevation, of the true happiness of man. There is a higher duty than to build almshouses for the poor, and that is, to save men from being degraded to the blighting influence of an almshouse. Man has a right to something more than bread to keep him from starving. He has a right to the aids, and encouragements, and culture, by which he may fulfil the destiny of a man: and until society is brought to recognise and reverence this, it will continue to groan under its present miseries.

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## THE POWER OF PRINCIPLES.

When will statesmen learn, that there are higher powers than political motives, interests, and intrigues? When will they learn the might which dwells in truth? When will they learn that the great moral and religious Ideas, which have now seized on and are working in men's souls, are the most efficient, durable forces, which are acting in the world? When will they learn that the past and present are not the future, but that the changes already wrought in society are only forerunners, signs, and springs of mightier revolutions? Politicians absorbed in near objects, are prophets only on a small scale. They may foretell the issues of the next election, though even here they are often baffled; but the breaking out of a deep moral conviction in the mass of men, is a mystery which they have little skill to interpret.

The old notion of the subjection of the many, for the comfort, ease, pleasure, and pride of the few, is fast wearing away. A far higher, and more rational conception of freedom, than entered into the loftiest speculations of ancient times, is spreading itself, and is changing the face of society. "Equality before the laws," has become the watchword of all civilized states. The absolute worth of a human being is better understood; that is, his worth as an individual, or on his own account, and not merely as a useful tool to others. Christianity is more and more seen to attach a sacredness and unspeakable dignity to every man, because each man is immortal. Such is the current of human thought. Principles of a higher order are beginning to operate on society, and the dawn of these primal,



everlasting lights, is a sure omen of a brighter day. This is the true sign of the coming ages. Politicians, seizing on the narrow, selfish principles of human nature, expect these to rule for ever. They hope, by their own machinery, to determine the movements of the world. But if history teaches any lesson, it is the impotence of statesmen: and, happily, this impotence is increasing every day, with the spread of lights and moral force among the people. Would politicians study history with more care, they might learn, even from the dark times which are past, that self-interest is not, after all, the mightiest agent in human affairs; that the course of human events has been more determined, on the whole, by great principles, by great emotions, by feeling, by enthusiasm, than by selfish calculations, or by selfish men. In the great conflict between the Oriental and the Western World, which was decided at Thermopylæ and Marathon; in the last great conflict between Polytheism and Theism, begun by Jesus Christ, and carried on by his followers; in the Reformation of Luther; in the American Revolution; in these grandest epochs of history, what was it which won the victory? What were the mighty, all-prevailing powers? Not political management, not self-interest, not the lower principles of human nature; but the principles of freedom and religion, moral power, moral enthusiasm, the divine aspirations of the human soul. Great thoughts and great emotions have a place in human history, which no historian has hitherto given them, and the future is to be more determined by these than the past.

One great idea stands out amidst the discoveries and improvements of modern times. It is,



that man is not to exercise arbitrary, irresponsible power, over man. To restrain power, to divide and balance it, to create responsibility for its just use, to secure the individual against its abuse, to substitute law for private will, to shield the weak from the strong, to give to the injured the means of redress, to set a fence round every man's property and rights, in a word, to secure liberty,—such, under various expressions, is the great object on which philosophers, patriots, philanthropists, have long fixed their thoughts and hopes.

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#### THE GREAT IDEA OF AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS.

Every country is characterized by certain great Ideas, which pervade the people and the government, and by these chiefly its rank is determined. When one idea predominates strongly above all others, it is a key to a nation's history. The great idea of Rome, that which the child drank in with his mother's milk, was Dominion. The great idea of France is Glory. In despotisms, the idea of the King or the Church possesses itself of the minds of the people, and a superstitious loyalty or piety becomes the badge of the inhabitants. The most interesting view of this country, is the grandeur of the idea which has determined its history, and which is expressed in all its institutions. Take away this, and we have nothing to distinguish us. In the refined arts, in manners, in works of genius, we are as yet surpassed. From our youth and insulated position, our history has no dazzling brilliancy. But one distinction belongs to us. A great Idea from the beginning has been working in the minds of this people, and it broke forth with peculiar

energy in our Revolution. This is the idea of Human Rights. In our Revolution, liberty was our watchword: but not a lawless liberty, not freedom from all restraint, but a moral freedom. Liberty was always regarded as each man's Right, imposing on every other man a moral obligation to abstain from doing it violence. Liberty and law were always united in our minds. By government, we understood the concentration of the power of the whole community to protect the rights of each and all its members. This was the grand idea on which all our institutions were built. We believed that the rights of the people were safest, and alone safe, in their own keeping, and therefore we adopted popular forms. We looked, indeed, to government for the promotion of the public welfare, as well as for the defence of rights. But we felt that the former was included in the latter; that, in securing to every man the largest liberty, the right to exercise and improve all his powers, to elevate himself and his condition, and to govern himself, subject only to the limitation which the equal freedom of others imposes, we were providing most effectually for the common good. It was felt, that, under this moral freedom, men's powers would expand, and would secure to them immeasurably greater good than could be conferred by a government, intermeddling perpetually with the subject, and imposing minute restraints.

These views of human rights, which pervade and light up our history, may be expressed in one word. They are summed up in respect for the Individual Man. In all other countries, the man has been obscured, overpowered by rulers, merged in the state, made a means or tool.

Here, every man has been recognised as having rights, on which no one can trench without crime. The nation has recognised something greater than the nation's prosperity, than outward, material interests; and that is, Individual Right. In our Revolution, a dignity was seen in human nature, a generous confidence was placed in men. It was believed, that they would attain to greater nobleness by being left to govern themselves; that they would attain to greater piety, by being left to worship God according to their own convictions; that they would attain to greater energy of intellect, and to higher truths, by being left to freedom of thought and utterance, than by the wisest forms of arbitrary rule. It was believed, that an universal expansion of the higher faculties was to be secured by increasing men's responsibilities, by giving them higher interests to watch over, by throwing them very much on themselves. Such is the grand idea which lies at the root of our institutions; such the fundamental doctrines of the political creed into which we have all been baptized.

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#### THE CHIEF ARGUMENT AGAINST SLAVERY.

This is to my own mind the great argument against seizing and using a man as property. He cannot be property in the sight of God and justice, because he is a Rational, Moral, Immortal Being; because created in God's image, and therefore in the highest sense his child; because created to unfold godlike faculties, and to govern himself by a Divine Law written on his heart, and re-published in God's Word. His whole nature forbids that he should be seized as property. From his very nature it follows, that so

to seize him is to offer an insult to his Maker, and to inflict aggravated social wrong. Into every human being God has breathed an immortal spirit, more precious than the whole outward creation. No earthly or celestial language can exaggerate the worth of a human being. No matter how obscure his condition. Thought, Reason, Conscience, the capacity of Virtue, the capacity of Christian Love, an Immortal Destiny, an intimate moral connection with God,—here are attributes of our common humanity which reduce to insignificance all outward distinctions, and make every human being unspeakably dear to his Maker. No matter how ignorant he may be. The capacity of Improvement allies him to the more instructed of his race, and places within his reach the knowledge and happiness of higher worlds. Every human being has in him the germ of the greatest idea in the universe, the idea of God; and to unfold this is the end of his existence. Every human being has in his breast the elements of that Divine, Everlasting Law, which the highest orders of the creation obey. He has the idea of Duty; and to unfold, revere, obey this, is the very purpose for which life was given. Every human being has the idea of what is meant by the word, Truth; that is, he sees, however dimly, the great object of Divine and created intelligence, and is capable of ever-enlarging perceptions of truth. Every human being has affections, which may be purified and expanded into a Sublime Love. He has, too, the idea of Happiness, and a thirst for it which cannot be appeased. Such is our nature. Wherever we see a man, we see the possessor of these great capacities. Did God make such a

being to be owned as a tree or a brute? How plainly was he made to exercise, unfold, improve his highest powers, made for a moral, spiritual good! and how is he wronged, and his Creator opposed, when he is forced and broken into a tool to another's physical enjoyment!

Such a being was plainly made for an End in Himself. He is a Person, not a Thing. He is an End, not a mere Instrument or Means. He was made for his own virtue and happiness. Is this end reconcileable with his being held and used as a chattel? The sacrifice of such a being to another's will, to another's present, outward, ill-comprehended good, is the greatest violence which can be offered to any Creature of God. It is to degrade him from his rank in the universe, to make him a means, not an end, to cast him out from God's spiritual family into the brutal herd.

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#### THE GREAT LAW OF HUMANITY.

The great duty of God's children is, to love one another. This duty on earth takes the name and form of the law of humanity. We are to recognise all men as brethren, no matter where born, or under what sky, or institution, or religion, they may live. Every man belongs to the race, and owes a duty to mankind. Every nation belongs to the family of nations, and is to desire the good of all. Nations are to love one another. It is true, that they usually adopt towards one another principles of undisguised selfishness, and glory in successful violence or fraud. But the great law of humanity is unrepealed. Men cannot vote this out of the universe by acclamation. The Christian precepts, "Do to others as you



would they should do to you: Love your neighbour as yourselves: Love your enemies;" apply to nations as well as individuals. A nation, renouncing them, is a Heathen, not a Christian nation. Men cannot, by combining themselves into narrower or larger societies, sever the sacred, blessed bond, which joins them to their kind. An evil nation, like an evil man, may indeed be withstood, but not in hatred and revenge. The law of humanity must reign over the assertion of all human rights. The vindictive, unforgiving spirit which prevails on the earth, must yield to the mild, impartial spirit of Jesus Christ.

I know that these principles will receive little hearty assent. Multitudes, who profess to believe in Christ, have no faith in the efficacy of his spirit, or in the accomplishment of that regenerating work which he came to accomplish. There is a worse scepticism than what passes under the name of infidelity, a scepticism as to the reality and the power of moral and Christian truth; and accordingly, a man who calls on a nation to love the great family of which it is a part, to desire the weal and the progress of the race, to blend its own interests with the interests of all, to wish well to its foes, must pass for a visionary, perhaps in war would be called a traitor. The first teacher of Universal Love was nailed to the cross for withstanding the national spirit, hopes, and prejudices of Judea. His followers, in these better days, escape with silent derision or neglect.

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#### THE CONDITIONS OF A JUST WAR.

When the spirit of justice, humanity, and forbearance, instead of spreading peace, provokes fresh outrage, this outrage must be met and



repressed by force. I know that many sincere Christians oppose to this doctrine the precept of Christ, "Resist not evil." But Christianity is wronged and its truth exposed to strong objections, when these and the like precepts are literally construed. The whole legislation of Christ is intended to teach us the spirit from which we should act, and not to lay down rules for outward conduct. The precept, "Resist not evil," if practised to the letter, would annihilate all government in the family and the state; for it is the great work of government to resist evil passions and evil deeds. It is indeed our duty, as Christians, to love our worst enemy, and to desire his true good; but we are to love not only our enemy, but our families, friends, and country, and to take a wise care of our own rights and happiness; and when we abandon to the violence of a wrong-doer these fellow-beings and these rights, commended by God to our love and care, we are plainly wanting in that expanded benevolence which Christianity demands. A nation, then, may owe it to its welfare and dignity to engage in war; and its honour demands that it should meet the trial with invincible resolution. It ought, at such a moment, to dismiss all fear, except the fear of its own passions—the fear of the crimes to which the exasperations and sore temptations of public hostilities expose a state.

The great idea which should rise to the mind of a country on meditating war, is rectitude. In declaring war, it should listen only to the voice of duty. To resolve on the destruction of our fellow-creatures without a command from conscience—a commission from God—is to bring

on a people a load of infamy and crime. A nation, in declaring war, should be lifted above its passions by the fearfulness and solemnity of the act. It should appeal with unfeigned confidence to Heaven and earth for its uprightness of purpose. It should go forth as the champion of truth and justice, as the minister of God, to vindicate and sustain that great moral and national law, without which life has no security, and social improvements no defence. It should be inspired with invincible courage, not by its passions, but by the dignity and holiness of its cause. Nothing in the whole compass of legislation is so solemn as a declaration of war. By nothing do a people incur such tremendous responsibility. Unless justly waged, war involves a people in the guilt of murder. The state which, without the command of justice and God, sends out fleets and armies to slaughter fellow-creatures, must answer for the blood it sheds, as truly as the assassin for the death of his victim. Oh, how loudly does the voice of blood cry to Heaven from the field of battle! Undoubtedly, the men whose names have come down to us with the loudest shouts of ages, stand now before the tribunal of eternal justice condemned as murderers; and the victories which have been thought to encircle a nation with glory, have fixed the same brand on multitudes in the sight of the final and Almighty Judge. How essential is it to a nation's honour that it should engage in war with a full conviction of rectitude!

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#### MARITIME LAW.

A vessel is sometimes said to be "an extension of the territory" to which it belongs. The

nation, we are told, is present in the vessel; and its honour and rights are involved in the treatment which its flag receives abroad. These ideas are in the main, true in regard to ships on the high seas. The sea is the exclusive property of no nation. It is subject to none. It is the common and equal property of all. No State has jurisdiction over it. No State can write its laws on that restless surface. A ship at sea carries with her, and represents the rights of her country, rights equal to those which any other enjoys. The slightest application of the laws of another nation to her is to be resisted. She is subjected to no law but that of her own country, and to the law of nations, which presses equally on all states. She may thus be called, with no violence to language, an extension of the territory to which she belongs. But suppose her to quit the open sea and enter a port. What a change is produced in her condition! At sea she sustained the same relations to all nations, those of an equal. Now, she sustains a new and peculiar relation to the nation which she has entered. She passes at once under its jurisdiction. She is subject to its laws. She is entered by its officers. If a criminal flies to her for shelter, he may be pursued and apprehended. If her own men violate the laws of the land, they may be seized and punished. The nation is not present in her. She has left the open highway of the ocean, where all nations are equals, and entered a port where one nation alone is clothed with authority. What matters it that a vessel in the harbour of Nassau is owned in America? This does not change her locality. She has contracted new duties and obligations by being placed under

a new jurisdiction. Her relations differ essentially from those which she sustained at home or on the open sea. These remarks apply, of course, to merchant vessels alone. A ship of war is "an extension of the territory to which she belongs," not only when she is on the ocean, but in a foreign port. In this respect she resembles an army marching by consent through a neutral country. Neither ship of war nor army falls under the jurisdiction of foreign states. Merchant vessels resemble individuals. Both become subject to the laws of the land which they enter.

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#### FREE TRADE.

Free trade!—this is the plain duty and plain interest of the human race. To level all barriers to free exchange; to cut up the system of restriction, root and branch; to open every port on earth to every product; this is the office of enlightened humanity. To this a free nation should especially pledge itself. Freedom of the seas; freedom of harbours; an intercourse of nations, free as the winds; this is not a dream of philanthropists. We are tending towards it, and let us hasten it. Under a wiser and more Christian civilization, we shall look back on our present restrictions, as we do on the swaddling bands, by which, in darker times, the human body was compressed.

Government enriches a people by removing obstructions to their powers, by defending them from wrong, and thus giving them opportunity to enrich themselves. Government is not the spring of the wealth of nations, but their own sagacity, industry, enterprise, and force of character. To leave a people to themselves, is generally the best

service their rulers can render. Time was when sovereigns fixed prices and wages, regulated industry and expense, and imagined that a nation would starve and perish, if it were not guided and guarded like an infant. But we have learned, that men are their own best guardians, that property is safest under its owner's care, and that, generally speaking, even great enterprises can better be accomplished by the voluntary association of individuals, than by the state. Indeed, we are met at every stage of this discussion, by the truth, that political power is a weak engine compared with *individual* intelligence, virtue, and effort.

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#### PARTY SPIRIT.

Human nature seems incapable of a stronger, more unrelenting passion. It is hard enough for an individual, when contending all alone for an interest or an opinion, to keep down his pride, wilfulness, love of victory, and other personal feelings. But let him join a multitude in the same warfare, and, without singular self-control, he receives into his single breast the vehemence, obstinacy, and vindictiveness of all. The triumph of his party becomes immeasurably dearer to him than the principle, true or false, which was the original ground of division. The conflict becomes a struggle, not for principle, but for power, for victory; and the desperateness, the wickedness of such struggles, is the great burden of history. In truth, it matters little what men divide about, whether it be a foot of land, or precedence in a procession. Let them but begin to fight for it, and self-will, ill-will, the rage for victory, the dread of mortification



and defeat, make the trifle as weighty as a matter of life and death. The Greek or Eastern empire was shaken to its foundation by parties, which differed only about the merits of charioteers at the amphitheatre. Party spirit is singularly hostile to moral independence. A man, in proportion as he drinks into it, sees, hears, judges by the senses and understandings of his party. He surrenders the freedom of a man, the right of using and speaking his own mind, and echoes the applauses or maledictions, with which the leaders or passionate partizans see fit that the country should ring.

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#### THE REAL ENEMIES OF SOCIETY.

It ought to be understood, that the great enemies of society are not found in its poorer ranks. The mass may, indeed, be used as tools; but the stirring and guiding powers of insurrection are found above. Communities fall by the vices of the prosperous ranks. We are referred to Rome, which was robbed of her liberties, and reduced to the most degrading vassalage, by the lawlessness of the plebeians, who sold themselves to demagogues and gave the republic into the hands of a dictator. But what made the plebeians an idle, dissolute and rapacious horde? It was the system of universal rapine, which, under the name of conquest, had been carried on for ages by patricians, by all the powers of the State; a system which glutted Rome with the spoils of the pillaged world; which fed her population without labour, from the public treasures, and corrupted them by public shows. It was this which helped to make the metropolis of the earth a sink of crime and pollution, such as the world



had never known. It was time, that the grand robber-state should be cast down from her guilty eminence. Her brutish populace, which followed Cæsar's car with shouts, was not worse than the venal crouching senate which registered his decrees. Let not the poor, bear the burden of the rich.

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#### NATIONAL RETRIBUTION.

Religious men know and should make it known, that nations cannot consolidate free institutions, and secure a lasting prosperity by crime. They know, that retribution awaits communities as well as individuals; and they should tremble amidst their hopes, when, with this solemn truth on their minds, they look round on their country. Let them consider the clearness with which God's will is now made known, and the signal blessings of his Providence poured out on this people, with a profusion accorded to no other under heaven; and then let them consider, our ingratitude for his boundless gifts, our unmeasured, unrighteous love of gain, our unprincipled party-spirit, and our faithless and cruel wrongs toward the Indian race; and can they help fearing, that the cup of wrath is filling for this people? Men, buried in themselves and in outward interests, atheists in heart and life, may scoff at the doctrine of national retribution, because they do not see God's hand stretched out to destroy guilty communities. But does not all history teach, that the unlicensed passions of a guilty people are more terrible ministers of punishment than miraculous inflictions? To chastise and destroy, God needs not interfere by supernatural judgments. In every community, there are elements

of discord, revolution, and ruin, pent up in the human soul, which need only to be quickened and set free by a new order of events, to shake and convulse the whole social fabric. Never were the causes of disastrous change in human affairs more active than at the present moment. Society heaves and trembles, from the struggle of opposing principles, as the earth quakes through the force of central fires. This is not the time for presumption, for defying Heaven by new crimes, for giving a new range to cupidity and ambition.

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#### LIBERTY ESSENTIAL TO VIRTUE.

All excellence, whether intellectual or moral, involves, as its essential elements, freedom, energy, and moral independence; so that the invader of these, whether from the throne or the pulpit, invades the most sacred interest of the human race. Intellectual excellence implies and requires these. This does not consist in passive assent even to the highest truths; or in the most extensive stores of knowledge acquired by an implicit faith, and lodged in the inert memory. It lies in force, freshness, and independence of thought; and is most conspicuously manifested by him who, loving truth supremely, seeks it resolutely, follows the light without fear, and modifies the views of others by the patient, strenuous exercise of his own faculties. To a man thus intellectually free, truth is not, what it is to passive multitudes, a foreign substance, dormant, lifeless, fruitless; but penetrating, prolific, full of vitality, and ministering to the health and expansion of the soul. And what we have said of intellectual excellence is still more true of moral. This has

its foundation and root in freedom, and cannot exist a moment without it. The very idea of virtue is, that it is a free act, the product or result of the mind's self-determining power. It is not good feeling, infused by nature or caught by sympathy; nor is it good conduct into which we have slidden through imitation, or which has been forced upon us by another's will. We ourselves are its authors in a high and peculiar sense. We indeed depend on God for virtue: for our capacity of moral action is wholly his gift and inspiration, and without his perpetual aid this capacity would avail nothing. But his aid is not compulsion. He respects, he cannot violate that moral freedom which is his richest gift. To the individual, the decision of his own character is left. He has more than kingly power in his own soul. Let him never resign it. Let none dare to interfere with it. Virtue is self-dominion, or, what is the same thing, it is self-subjection to the principle of duty, that highest law in the soul. If these views of intellectual and moral excellence be just, then to invade men's freedom is to aim the deadliest blow at their honour and happiness; and their worst foe is he who fetters their reason, who makes his will their law, who makes them tools, echoes, copies of himself.

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#### THE PERFECTIBILITY OF THE HUMAN RACE.

Were I to look on the world as many do; were I to see in it a maze without a plan, a whirl of changes without aim, a stage for good and evil to fight without an issue; an endless motion without progress, a world where sin and idolatry are to triumph for ever, and the oppressor's rod

never to be broken, I should turn from it with sickness of heart, and care not how soon the sentence of its destruction were fulfilled. History and philosophy plainly show to me in human nature the foundation and promise of a better era, and Christianity concurs with these. The thought of a higher condition of the world, was the secret fire which burned in the soul of the Great Founder of our religion, and in his first followers. That he was to act on all future generations, that he was sowing a seed which was to grow up and spread its branches over all nations, this great thought never forsook him in life and death. That under Christianity a civilization has grown up, containing in itself nobler elements than are found in earlier forms of society, who can deny? Great ideas and feelings, derived from this source, are now at work. Amidst the prevalence of crime and selfishness, there has sprung up in the human heart a sentiment or principle unknown in earlier ages, an enlarged and trustful philanthropy, which recognises the rights of every human being, which is stirred by the terrible oppressions and corruptions of the world, and which does not shrink from conflict with evil in its worst forms.

There has sprung up, too, a faith of which antiquity knew nothing, in the final victory of truth and right, in the elevation of men to a clearer intelligence, to more fraternal union, and to a purer worship. This faith is taking its place among the great springs of human action, is becoming even a passion in more fervent spirits. I hail it as a prophecy which is to fulfil itself. A nature capable of such an aspiration cannot be degraded for ever. Ages rolled away before

it was learned, that this world of matter which we tread on is in constant motion. We are beginning to learn, that the intellectual, moral, social world has its motion too, not fixed and immutable like that of matter, but one which the free-will of men is to carry on, and which, instead of returning into itself like the earth's orbit, is to stretch forward for ever. This hope lightens the mystery and burthen of life. It is a star which shines on me in the darkest night; and I should rejoice to reveal it to the eyes of my fellow-creatures.

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#### THE IDEA OF A MAN.

I should say, that it consists, first, in that spiritual principle, called sometimes the Reason, sometimes the Conscience, which, rising above what is local and temporary, discerns immutable truth, and everlasting right; which, in the midst of imperfect things, conceives of Perfection; which is universal and impartial, standing in direct opposition to the partial, selfish principles of human nature; which says to me with authority, that my neighbour is as precious as myself, and his rights as sacred as my own; which commands me to receive all truth, however it may war with my pride, and to do all justice, however it may conflict with my interest; and which calls me to rejoice with love in all that is beautiful, good, holy, happy, in whatever being these attributes may be found. This principle is a ray of Divinity in man. We do not know what man is, till something of the celestial grandeur of this principle in the soul be discerned. There is another grand view of man, included indeed in the former, yet deserving distinct notice.



He is a Free being ; created to act from a spring in his own breast, to form himself, and to decide his own destiny ; connected intimately with nature, but not enslaved to it ; connected still more strongly with God, yet not enslaved even to the Divinity, but having power to render or withhold the service due to his Creator ; encompassed by a thousand warring forces, by physical elements which inflict pleasure and pain, by dangers seen and unseen, by the influences of a tempting, sinful world, yet endued by God with power to contend with all, to perfect himself by conflict with the very forces which threaten to overwhelm him. Such is the idea of a man. Happy he in whom it is unfolded by earnest thought.

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#### THE DUTY OF SELF-CULTURE.

The ground of a man's culture lies in his nature, not in his calling. His powers are to be unfolded on account of their inherent dignity, not their outward direction. He is to be educated, because he is a man, not because he is to make shoes, nails, or pins. A trade is plainly not the great end of his being, for his mind cannot be shut up in it ; his force of thought cannot be exhausted on it. He has faculties, to which it gives no action, and deep wants, it cannot answer. Poems, and systems of theology and philosophy, which have made some noise in the world, have been wrought at the work bench and amidst the toils of the field. How often, when the arms are mechanically plying a trade, does the mind, lost in reverie or day-dreams, escape to the ends of the earth ! How often does the pious heart of woman mingle the greatest of all thoughts, that



of God, with household drudgery! Undoubtedly, a man is to perfect himself in his trade, for by it he is to earn his bread and to serve the community. But bread or subsistence is not his highest good; for if it were, his lot would be harder than that of the inferior animals, for whom nature spreads a table, and weaves a wardrobe, without a care of their own. Nor was he made chiefly to minister to the wants of the community. A rational, moral being, cannot without infinite wrong, be converted into a mere instrument of others' gratification. He is necessarily an end, not a means. A mind, in which are sown the seeds of wisdom, disinterestedness, firmness of purpose, and piety, is worth more than all the outward material interests of a world. It exists for itself, for its own perfection, and must not be enslaved to its own or others' animal wants. You tell me, that a liberal culture, is needed for men who are to fill high stations, but not for such as are doomed to vulgar labour. I answer, that Man is a greater name than President or King. Truth and goodness are equally precious, in whatever sphere they are found. Besides, men of all conditions sustain equally the relations, which give birth to the highest virtues and demand the highest powers. The labourer is not a mere labourer. He has close, tender, responsible connections with God and his fellow-creatures. He is a son, husband, father, friend, and Christian. He belongs to a home, a country, a church, a race; and is such a man to be cultivated only for a trade? Was he not sent into the world for a great work? To educate a child perfectly, requires profounder thought, greater wisdom,

than to govern a state; and for this plain reason, the interests and wants of the latter are more superficial, coarser, and more obvious, than the spiritual capacities, the growth of thought and feeling, and the subtle laws of the mind, which must all be studied and comprehended, before the work of education can be thoroughly performed; and yet to all conditions, this greatest work on earth is equally committed by God. What plainer proof do we need, that a higher culture, than has yet been dreamed of, is needed by our whole race?

Not a few persons desire to improve themselves only to get property and rise in the world; but such do not properly choose improvement, but something outward and foreign to themselves; and so low an impulse can produce only a stunted, partial, and uncertain growth. A man as I have said, is to cultivate himself because he is a man. He is to start with the conviction, that there is something greater within him than in the whole material creation, than in all the worlds which press on the eye and ear; and that inward improvements have a worth and dignity in themselves, quite distinct from the power they give over outward things. Undoubtedly a man is to labour to better his condition, but first to better himself. If he knows no higher use of his mind, than to invent and drudge for his body, his case is desperate as far as culture is concerned.

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#### MAN'S SELF-SEARCHING AND SELF-FORMING POWERS.

We have first the faculty of turning the mind on itself; of recalling its past, and watching its present operations; of learning its various capa-

cities and susceptibilities, what it can do and bear, what it can enjoy and suffer; and of thus learning in general what our nature is, and what it was made for. It is worthy of observation, that we are able to discern not only what we already are, but what we may become, to see in ourselves germs and promises, of a growth to which no bounds can be set, to dart beyond what we have actually gained, to the idea of Perfection, as the end of our being. It is by this self-comprehending power that we are distinguished from the brutes, which give no signs of looking into themselves. Without this there would be no self-culture, for we should not know the work to be done; and one reason why self-culture is so little proposed is, that so few penetrate into their own nature. To most men their own spirits are shadowy, unreal, compared with what is outward. When they happen to cast a glance inward, they see there only a dark, vague chaos. They distinguish perhaps some violent passion, which has driven them to injurious excess; but their highest powers hardly attract a thought; and thus multitudes live and die, as truly strangers to themselves as to countries of which they have heard the name, but which human foot has never trodden.

But self-culture is possible not only because we enter into and search ourselves. We have a still nobler power, that of acting on, determining and forming ourselves. This is a fearful as well as glorious endowment, for it is the ground of human responsibility. We have the power not only of tracing our powers, but of guiding and impelling them; not only of watching our passions, but of controlling them; not

only of seeing our faculties grow, but of applying to them means and influences to aid their growth. We can stay or change the current of thought. We can concentrate the intellect on objects which we wish to comprehend. We can fix our eyes on perfection, and make almost every thing speed us towards it. This is indeed a noble prerogative of our nature. Possessing this, it matters little what or where we are now, for we can conquer a better lot, and even be happier for starting from the lowest point. Of all the discoveries which men need to make, the most important at the present moment, is that of the self-forming power, treasured up in themselves. They little suspect its extent, as little as the savage apprehends the energy which the mind is created to exert on the material world. It transcends in importance all our power over outward nature. There is more of divinity in it, than in the force which impels the outward universe; and yet how little we comprehend it! How it slumbers in most men unsuspected, unused! This makes self-culture possible, and binds it on us as a solemn duty.

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#### THE SOUL'S PRINCIPLE OF GROWTH.

We were made to grow. Our faculties are germs, and given for an expansion, to which nothing authorises us to set bounds. The soul bears the impress of illimitableness, in the thirst, the unquenchable thirst, which it brings with it into being, for a power, knowledge, happiness, which it never gains, and which always carry it forward into futurity. The body soon reaches its limit. But intellect, affection, moral energy, in proportion to their growth, tend to further

enlargement, and every acquisition is an impulse to something higher. When I consider this principle or capacity of the human soul, I cannot restrain the hope which it awakens. The partition-walls which imagination has reared between men and higher orders of beings vanish. I no longer see aught to prevent our becoming whatever was good and great in Jesus on earth. In truth, I feel my utter inability to conceive what a mind is to attain which is to advance for ever. Add but that element, eternity, to man's progress, and the results of his existence surpass, not only human, but angelic thought. Give me this, and the future glory of the human mind becomes to me as incomprehensible as God himself. We wonder indeed when we are told, that one day we shall be as the angels of God. I apprehend that as great a wonder has been realized already on the earth. I apprehend that the distance between the mind of Newton and of a Hottentot may have been as great as between Newton and an angel. There is another view still more striking. This Newton who lifted his calm, sublime eye to the heavens, and read among the planets and the stars, the great law of the material universe, was, forty or fifty years before, an infant, without one clear perception, and unable to distinguish his nurse's arm from the pillow on which he slept. Howard, too, who, under the strength of an all-sacrificing benevolence, explored the depths of human suffering, was, forty or fifty years before, an infant wholly absorbed in himself, grasping at all he saw, and almost breaking his little heart with fits of passion when the idlest toy was withheld. Has not man already traversed as wide a space as separates him from



angels? And why must he stop? There is no extravagance in the boldest anticipation. We may truly become one with Christ, a partaker of that celestial mind. He is truly our brother, one of our family. Let us make him our constant model.

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#### GREAT AND LITTLE MINDS.

Intellectual culture consists, not chiefly, as many are apt to think, in accumulating information, though this is important, but in building up a force of thought which may be turned at will on any subject, on which we are called to pass judgment. This force is manifested in the concentration of the attention, in accurate, penetrating observation, in reducing complex subjects to their elements, in diving beneath the effect to the cause, in detecting the more subtle differences and resemblances of things, in reading the future in the present, and especially in rising from particular facts to general laws or universal truths. This last exertion of the intellect, its rising to broad views and great principles, constitutes what is called the philosophical mind, and is especially worthy of culture. What it means, your own observation must have taught you. You must have taken note of two classes of men, the one always employed on details, on particular facts, and the other using these facts as foundations of higher, wider truths. The latter are philosophers. For example, men had for ages seen pieces of wood, stones, metals, falling to the ground. Newton seized on these particular facts, and rose to the idea, that all matter tends, or is attracted, towards all matter, and then defined the law according to which this attraction or



force acts at different distances, thus giving us a grand principle, which, we have reason to think, extends to and controls the whole outward creation. One man reads a history, and can tell you all its events, and there stops. Another combines these events, brings them under one view, and learns the great causes which are at work on this or another nation, and what are its great tendencies, whether to freedom or despotism, to one or another form of civilization. So one man talks continually about the particular actions of this or another neighbour; whilst another looks beyond the acts, to the inward principle from which they spring, and gathers from them larger views of human nature. In a word, one man sees all things apart and in fragments, whilst another strives to discover the harmony, connection, unity of all. One of the great evils of society is, that men, occupied perpetually with petty details, want general truths, want broad and fixed principles. Hence many, not wicked, are unstable, habitually inconsistent, as if they were overgrown children rather than men. To build up that strength of mind which apprehends and cleaves to great universal truths, is the highest intellectual self-culture; and here I wish to observe how entirely this culture agrees with that of the moral and the religious principles of our nature, of which I have previously spoken. In each of these the improvement of the soul consists in raising it above what is narrow, particular, individual, selfish, to the universal and unconfined. To improve a man is to liberalize, enlarge him in thought, feeling, and purpose. Narrowness of intellect and heart, this is the degradation from which all culture aims to rescue the human being.

## THE SPIRITUAL SCIENCES ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.

The great object on which force of thought is to be exerted, is Mind, Spirit, comprehending under this word, God and all his intelligent offspring. This is the subject of what are called the metaphysical and moral sciences. This is the grand field for thought; for the outward, material world is the shadow of the spiritual, and made to minister to it. This study is of vast extent. It comprehends theology, metaphysics, moral philosophy, political science, history, literature. This is a formidable list, and it may seem to include a vast amount of knowledge, which is necessarily placed beyond the reach of the labourer. But it is an interesting thought, that the key to these various sciences is given to every human being in his own nature, so that they are peculiarly accessible to him. How is it that I get my ideas of God, of my fellow-creatures, of the deeds, suffering, motives, which make up universal history? I comprehend all these from the consciousness of what passes in my own soul. The mind within me is a type, representative of all others, and therefore I can understand all. Whence come my conceptions of the intelligence, and justice, and goodness, and power of God? It is because my own spirit contains the germs of these attributes. The ideas of them are first derived from my own nature, and therefore I comprehend them in other beings. Thus the foundation of all the sciences which treat of mind is laid in every man's breast. The good man is exercising in his business and family, faculties and affections which bear a likeness to the attributes of the divinity, and to the energies which have made the greatest men illustrious;

so that in studying himself, in learning the highest principles and laws of his own soul, he is in truth studying God, studying all human history, studying the philosophy which has immortalised the sages of ancient and modern times. In every man's mind and life all other minds and lives are more or less represented and wrapt up. To study other things, I must go into the outward world and perhaps go far. To study the science of spirit, I must come home and enter my own soul. The profoundest books that have ever been written, do nothing more than bring out, place in clear light, what is passing in each of your minds. So near you, so within you is the grandest truth.

No work of the most exalted genius can teach us so much, as the revelation of human nature in the secrets of our own souls, in the workings of our own passions, in the operations of our own intelligence, in the retributions which follow our own good and evil deeds, in the dissatisfaction with the present, in the spontaneous thoughts and aspirations, which form part of every man's biography. The study of our own history from childhood, of all the stages of our development, of the good and bad influences which have beset us, of our mutations of feeling and purpose, and of the great current which is setting us towards future happiness or woe; this is a study to make us nobly wise; and who of us has not access to this fountain of eternal truth?

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#### THE SELFISH AND THE DISINTERESTED PRINCIPLES.

When a man looks into himself, he discovers two distinct orders or kinds of principles, which

it behoves him especially to comprehend. He discovers desires, appetites, passions, which terminate in himself, which crave and seek his own interest, gratification, distinction; and he discovers another principle, an antagonist to these, which is Impartial, Disintèrested, Universal, enjoining on him a regard to the rights and happiness of other beings, and laying on him obligations which *must* be discharged, cost what they may, or however they may clash with his particular pleasure or gain. No man, however narrowed to his own interest, however hardened by selfishness, can deny, that there springs up within him a great idea in opposition to interest, the idea of Duty, that an inward voice calls him more or less distinctly, to revere and exercise Impartial Justice, and Universal Good-will. This disinterested principle in human nature we call sometimes reason, sometimes conscience, sometimes the moral sense or faculty. But, be its name what it may, it is a real principle in each of us, and it is the supreme power within us, to be cultivated above all others, for on its culture the right development of all others depends. The passions indeed may be stronger than the conscience, may lift up a louder voice; but their clamour differs wholly from the tone of command in which the conscience speaks. They are not clothed with its authority, its binding power. In their very triumphs, they are rebuked by the moral principle, and often cower before its still, deep, menacing voice. No part of self-knowledge is more important than to discern clearly these two great principles, the self-seeking and the disinterested; and the most important part of self-culture is to depress the former, and to exalt

the latter, or to enthrone the sense of duty within us. There are no limits to the growth of this moral force in man, if he will cherish it faithfully. There have been men, whom no power in the universe could turn from the Right, by whom death in its most dreadful forms has been less dreaded, than transgression of the inward law of universal justice and love.

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THE SENSE OF DUTY, GOD'S GREATEST GIFT.

The sense of duty is the greatest gift of God. The Idea of Right is the primary and the highest revelation of God to the human mind, and all outward revelations are founded on and addressed to it. All mysteries of science and theology fade away before the grandeur of the simple perception of duty, which dawns on the mind of the little child. That perception brings him into the moral kingdom of God. That, lays on him an everlasting bond. He, in whom the conviction of duty is unfolded, becomes subject from that moment to a law, which no power in the universe can abrogate. He forms a new and indissoluble connexion with God, that of an accountable being. He begins to stand before an inward tribunal, on the decisions of which his whole happiness rests; he hears a voice, which, if faithfully followed, will guide him to perfection, and in neglecting which he brings upon himself inevitable misery. We little understand the solemnity of the moral principle in every human mind. We think not how awful are its functions. We forget that it is the germ of immortality. Did we understand it, we should look with a feeling of reverence on every being to whom it is given.

This is the great gift of God. We can con-



ceive no greater. In seraph and archangel, we can conceive no higher energy than the power of virtue, or the power of forming themselves after the will and moral perfections of God. This power breaks down all barriers between the seraph and the lowest human being; it makes them brethren. Whoever has derived from God this perception and capacity of rectitude, has a bond of union with the spiritual world, stronger than all the ties of nature. He possesses a principle, which if he is faithful to it, must carry him forward for ever, and ensures to him the improvement and happiness of the highest order of things.

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#### SPIRITUAL INTUITIONS.

It is a matter of experience, that the greatest ideas often come to us, when right-minded, we know not how. They flash on us as lights from heaven. A man seriously given to the culture of his mind in virtue and truth, finds himself under better teaching than that of man. Revelations of his own soul, of God's intimate presence, of the grandeur of the creation, of the glory of disinterestedness, of the deformity of wrong-doing, of the dignity of universal justice, of the might of moral principle, of the immutableness of truth, of immortality, and of the inward sources of happiness; these revelations, awakening a thirst for something higher than he is or has, come of themselves to an humble, self-improving man. Sometimes a common scene in nature, one of the common relations of life, will open itself to us with a brightness and pregnancy of meaning unknown before. Sometimes a thought of this kind forms an era in life. It changes the whole



future course. It is a new creation. And these great ideas are not confined to men of any class. They are communications of the Infinite Mind to all minds which are open to their reception; and labour is a far better condition for their reception than luxurious or fashionable life. It is even better than a studious life, when this fosters vanity, pride, and the spirit of jealous competition. A childlike simplicity attracts these revelations more than a selfish culture of intellect, however far extended.

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#### THE PERCEPTION OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

Beauty is an all-pervading presence. It unfolds in the numberless flowers of the spring. It waves in the branches of the trees and the green blades of grass. It haunts the depths of the earth and sea, and gleams out in the hues of the shell and the precious stone. And not only these minute objects, but the ocean, the mountains, the clouds, the heavens, the stars, the rising and setting sun, all overflow with beauty. The universe is its temple; and those men, who are alive to it, cannot lift their eyes without feeling themselves encompassed with it on every side. Now this beauty is so precious, the enjoyments it gives are so refined and pure, so congenial to our tenderest and noblest feelings, and so akin to worship, that it is painful to think of the multitude of men as living in the midst of it, and living almost as blind to it, as if, instead of this fair earth and glorious sky, they were tenants of a dungeon. An infinite joy is lost to the world, by the want of culture of this spiritual endowment. Suppose I were to visit a cottage, and to see its walls lined with the choicest pictures of

Raphael, and every spare nook filled with statues of the most exquisite workmanship, and that I were to learn, that neither man, woman, nor child ever cast an eye at these miracles of art, how should I feel their privation; how should I want to open their eyes, and to help them to comprehend and feel the loveliness and grandeur which in vain courted their notice! But every husbandman is living in sight of the works of a diviner Artist; and how much would his existence be elevated, could he see the glory which shines forth in their forms, hues, proportions, and moral expression! I have spoken only of the beauty of nature; but how much of this mysterious charm is found in the elegant arts, and especially in literature? The best books have most beauty. The greatest truths are wronged if not linked with beauty, and they win their way most surely and deeply into the soul when arrayed in this their natural and fit attire. Now no man receives the true culture of a man, in whom the sensibility to the beautiful is not cherished.

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#### THE FEELING OF PERFECTIBILITY.

A man who wakes up to the consciousness of having been created for progress and perfection, looks with new eyes on himself and on the world in which he lives. This great truth stirs the soul from its depths, breaks up old associations of ideas, and establishes new ones, just as a mighty agent of chemistry, brought into contact with natural substances, dissolves the old affinities which had bound their particles together, and arranges them anew. This truth particularly aids us to penetrate the mysteries of human life. By revealing

to us the end of our being, it helps us to comprehend more and more, the wonderful, the infinite system, to which we belong. A man in the common walks of life, who has faith in perfection, in the unfolding of the human spirit, as the great purpose of God, possesses more the secret of the universe, perceives more the harmonics or mutual adaptations of the world without and the world within him, is a wiser interpreter of Providence, and reads nobler lessons of duty in the events which pass before him, than the profoundest philosopher who wants this grand central truth.

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#### TRUE CULTURE.

The truth is, that there is no cultivation of the human being, worthy of the name, but that which begins and ends with the Moral and Religious nature. No other teaching can make a Man. We are striving indeed to develop the soul almost exclusively by intellectual stimulants and nutriment, by schools and colleges, by accomplishments and fine arts. We are hoping to form men and women by literature and science; but all in vain. We shall learn in time that moral and religious culture is the foundation and strength of all true cultivation; that we are deforming human nature by the means relied on for its growth, and that the poor who receive a care which awakens their consciences and moral sentiments, start under happier auspices than the prosperous, who place supreme dependence on the education of the intellect and the taste.

I look with admiration on the intellectual force which combines and masters scattered facts, and by analysis and comparison ascends to the general laws of the material universe. But the

philosopher, who does not see in the force within him, something nobler than the outward nature which he analyzes, who in tracing mechanical and chemical agencies, is unconscious of a higher action in his own soul, who is not led by all finite powers to the Omnipotent, and who does not catch, in the order and beauty of the universe, some glimpses of Spiritual Perfection, stops at the very threshold of the temple of truth. Miserably narrow is the culture which confines the soul to Matter, which turns it to the Outward as to something nobler than itself. I fear the spirit of science, at the present day, is too often a degradation rather than the true culture of the soul. It is the bowing down of the heaven-born spirit before unthinking mechanism.

The true cultivation of a human being, consists in the development of great moral ideas; that is, the Ideas of God, of Duty, of Right, of Justice, of Love, of Self-sacrifice, of Moral Perfection as manifested in Christ, of Happiness, of Immortality, of Heaven. The elements or germs of these ideas, belong to every soul, constitute its essence, and are intended for endless expansion. These are the chief distinctions of our nature; they constitute our humanity. The Light in which these ideas rise on the mind, the Love which they awaken, and the Force of Will with which they are brought to sway the outward and inward life, here and here only, are the measures of human cultivation. One ray of moral and religious truth is worth all the wisdom of the schools. One lesson from Christ, will carry you higher than years of study under those, who are too enlightened to follow this celestial guide.

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## GREAT IDEAS.

What is needed to elevate the soul is, not that a man should know all that has been thought and written in regard to the spiritual nature, not that a man should become an Encyclopedia, but that the Great Ideas, in which all discoveries terminate, which sum up all sciences, which the philosopher extracts from infinite details, may be comprehended and felt. It is not the quantity, but the quality of knowledge, which determines the mind's dignity. A man of immense information, may, through the want of large and comprehensive ideas, be far inferior in intellect to a labourer, who, with little knowledge, has yet seized on great truths. For example, I do not expect the labourer to study theology in the ancient languages, in the writings of the Fathers, in the history of sects, &c. &c. ; nor is this needful. All theology, scattered as it is through countless volumes, is summed up in the idea of God; and let this idea shine bright and clear in the labourer's soul, and he has the essence of theological libraries, and a far higher light than has visited thousands of renowned divines. A great mind is formed by a few great ideas, not by an infinity of loose details. I have known very learned men, who seemed to me very poor in intellect, because they had no grand thoughts. What avails it, that a man has studied ever so minutely the histories of Greece and Rome, if the great Ideas of Freedom, and Beauty, and Valour, and Spiritual Energy, have not been kindled by those records into living fires in his soul. The illumination of an age does not consist in the amount of its knowledge, but in the broad and noble principles, of which that



knowledge is the foundation and inspirer. The truth is, that the most laborious and successful student is confined in his researches to a very few of God's works; but this limited knowledge of things may still suggest universal laws, broad principles, grand ideas, and these elevate the mind. There are certain thoughts, principles, ideas, which by their nature rule over all knowledge, which are intrinsically glorious, quickening, all-comprehending, eternal.

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#### SPIRITUAL FREEDOM.

I call that mind free, which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which contemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognizes its own reality and greatness, which passes life, not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting, and seeking after righteousness.

I call that mind free, which escapes the bondage of matter, which, instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison-wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit, helps to its own spiritual enlargement.

I call that mind free, which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers, which calls no man master, which does not content itself with a passive or hereditary faith, which opens itself to light whence-soever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, which, whilst consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself, and uses instructions from abroad, not to supersede but to quicken and exalt its own energies.



I call that mind free, which sets no bounds to its love, which is not imprisoned in itself, or in a sect, which recognizes in all human beings the image of God and the rights of his children, which delights in virtue and sympathizes with suffering wherever they are seen, which conquers pride, anger, and sloth, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind.

I call that mind free, which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the torrent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement, and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles, which it has deliberately espoused.

I call that mind free, which protects itself against the usurpations of society, which does not cower to human opinion, which feels itself accountable to a higher tribunal than man's, which respects a higher law than fashion, which respects itself too much to be the slave or tool of the many or the few.

I call that mind free, which, through confidence in God and in the power of virtue, has cast off all fear but that of wrong-doing, which no menace or peril can enthrall, which is calm in the midst of tumults, and possesses itself though all else be lost.

I call that mind free, which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on its old virtues, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but which forgets what is behind, listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions.

I call that mind free, which is jealous of its own freedom, which guards itself from being merged in others, which guards its empire over itself as nobler than the empire of the world.

In fine, I call that mind free, which, conscious of its affinity with God, and confiding in his promises by Jesus Christ, devotes itself faithfully to the unfolding of all its powers, which passes the bounds of time and death, which hopes to advance for ever, and which finds inexhaustible power, both for action and suffering, in the prospect of immortality.

Such is the spiritual freedom which Christ came to give. It consists in moral force, in self-control, in the enlargement of thought and affection, and in the unrestrained actions of our best powers. This is the great good of Christianity, nor can we conceive a greater within the gift of God.

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#### DANGER THE MEANS TO PROGRESS.

Danger we cannot avoid. It is a grand element of human life. We always walk on precipices. It is unmanly, unwise, it shows a want of faith in God and humanity, to deny to others and ourselves free scope and the expansion of our best powers, because of the possible collisions and pains to be feared from extending activity. Many, indeed, sigh for security as the supreme good. But God intends us for something better, for effort, conflict, and progress. And is it not well to live in a stirring and mighty world, even though we suffer from it? If we look at outward nature, we find ourselves surrounded with vast and fearful elements, air, sea, and fire, which sometimes burst all bounds, and overwhelm man

and his labours in ruin. But who of us would annihilate these awful forces, would make the ocean a standing pool, and put to silence the loud blast, in order that life may escape every peril? This mysterious, infinite, irresistible might of nature, breaking out in countless forms and motions, makes nature the true school for man, and gives it all its interest. In the soul, still mightier forces are pent up, and their expansion has its perils. But all are from God, who has blended with them checks, restraints, balances, re-actions, by which all work together for good. Let us never forget, that amidst this fearful stir, there is a Paternal Providence, under which the education of our race has gone on, and a higher condition of humanity has been achieved.

Every condition, be it what it may, has hardships, hazards, pains. We try to escape them; we pine for a sheltered lot, for a smooth path, for cheering friends, and unbroken success. But Providence ordains storms, disasters, hostilities, sufferings; and the great question, whether we shall live to any purpose or not, whether we shall grow strong in mind and heart, or be weak and pitiable, depends on nothing so much as on our use of these adverse circumstances. Outward evils are designed to school our passions, and rouse our faculties and virtues into intenser action. Sometimes they seem to create new powers. Difficulty is the element, and resistance the true work of a man. Self-culture never goes on so fast, as when embarrassed circumstances, the opposition of men or the elements, unexpected changes of the times, or other forms of suffering, instead of disheartening, throw us on our inward resources, turn us for strength to God, clear up

to us the great purpose of life, and inspire calm resolution. No greatness or goodness is worth much, unless tried in these fires. Hardships are not on this account to be sought for. They come fast enough of themselves, and we are in more danger of sinking under, than of needing them. But when God sends them, they are noble means of self-culture, and as such, let us meet and bear them cheerfully. Thus all parts of our condition may be pressed into the service of self-improvement.

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#### THE MORAL PURPOSE OF LABOUR.

I have faith in labour, and I see the goodness of God in placing us in a world where labour alone can keep us alive. Man owes his growth, his energy, chiefly to that striving of the will, that conflict with difficulty, which we call Effort. Easy, pleasant work does not make robust minds, does not give men a consciousness of their powers, does not train them to endurance, to perseverance, to steady force of will, that force without which all other acquisitions avail nothing. Manual labour is a school, in which men are placed to get energy of purpose and character, a vastly more important endowment than all the learning of all other schools. They are placed, indeed, under hard masters, physical sufferings and wants, the power of fearful elements, and the vicissitudes of all human things; but these stern teachers do a work which no compassionate, indulgent friend could do for us; and true wisdom will bless Providence for their sharp ministry. I have great faith in hard work. The material world does much for the mind by its beauty and order; but it does more for our

minds by the pains it inflicts, by its obstinate resistance which nothing but patient toil can overcome, by its vast forces which nothing but unremitting skill and effort can turn to our use, by its perils which demand continual vigilance, and by its tendencies to decay. I believe that difficulties are more important to the human mind than what we call assistances. Work we all must, if we mean to bring out and perfect our nature. Even if we do not work with the hands, we must undergo equivalent toil in some other direction. No business or study which does not present obstacles, tasking to the full the intellect and the will, is worthy of a man. In science, he who does not grapple with hard questions, who does not concentrate his whole intellect in vigorous attention, who does not aim to penetrate what at first repels him, will never attain to mental force. The uses of toil reach beyond the present world. The capacity of steady, earnest labour is, I apprehend, one of our great preparations for another state of being. When I see the vast amount of toil required of men, I feel that it must have important connexions with their future existence; and that he who has met this discipline manfully, has laid one essential foundation of improvement, exertion, and happiness, in the world to come. You will here see that to me labour has great dignity. It is not merely the grand instrument by which the earth is overspread with fruitfulness and beauty, and the ocean subdued, and matter wrought into innumerable forms for comfort and ornament. It has a far higher function, which is, to give force to the will, efficiency, courage, the capacity of endurance, and persevering devotion to far-



reaching plans. Alas, for the man who has not learned to work!

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#### THOUGHT ESSENTIAL TO VIRTUE.

Thought, thought, is the fundamental distinction of mind, and the great work of life. All that a man does outwardly, is but the expression and completion of his inward thought. To work effectually, he must think clearly. To act nobly, he must think nobly. Intellectual force is a principal element of the soul's life, and should be proposed by every man as a principal end of his being. It is common to distinguish between the intellect and the conscience, between the power of thought and virtue, and to say that virtuous action is worth more than strong thinking. But we mutilate our nature by thus drawing lines between actions or energies of the soul, which are intimately, indissolubly bound together. The head and heart are not more vitally connected than thought and virtue. Does not conscience include, as a part of itself, the noblest action of the intellect or reason? Do we not degrade it by making it a mere feeling? Is it not something more? Is it not a wise discernment of the right, the holy, the good? Take away thought from virtue, and what remains worthy of a man? Is not high virtue more than blind instinct? Is it not founded on, and does it not include clear, bright perceptions of what is lovely and grand in character and action? Without power of thought, what we call conscientiousness, or a desire to do right, shoots out into illusion, exaggeration, pernicious excess. The most cruel deeds on earth have been perpetrated in the name of conscience. Men have hated and murdered



one another from a sense of duty. The worst frauds have taken the name of pious. Thought, intelligence, is the dignity of a man, and no man is rising but in proportion as he is learning to think clearly and forcibly, or directing the energy of his mind to the acquisition of truth. Every man, in whatsoever condition, is to be a student. No matter what other vocation he may have, his chief vocation is to Think.

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#### FREE INQUIRY.

It is sometimes said, that the multitude may think on the common business of life, but not on higher subjects, and especially on religion. This it is said, must be received on authority; on this, men in general can form no judgment of their own. But this is the last subject on which the individual should be willing to surrender himself to others' dictation. In nothing has he so strong an interest. In nothing is it so important that his mind and heart should be alive and engaged. In nothing has he readier means of judging for himself. In nothing, as history shows, is he more likely to be led astray by such as assume the office of thinking for him. Religion is a subject open to all minds. Its great truths have their foundation in the soul itself, and their proofs surround us on all sides. God has not shut up the evidence of his being in a few books, written in a foreign language, and locked up in the libraries of colleges and philosophers; but has written his name on the heavens and on the earth, and even on the minutest animal and plant; and his word, taught by Jesus Christ, was not given to scribes and lawyers, but taught to the poor, to the mass of men, on mountains, in streets,

and on the sea-shore. Let me not be told that the multitude do actually receive religion on authority, or on the word of others. I reply, that a faith so received seems to me of little worth. The precious, the living, the effectual part of a poor man's faith, is that of which he sees the reasonableness and excellence; that, which approves itself to his intelligence, his conscience, his heart; that, which answers to deep wants in his own soul, and of which he has the witness in his inward and outward experience. All other parts of his belief, those which he takes on blind trust, and in which he sees no marks of truth and divinity, do him little or no good. Too often they do him harm, by perplexing his simple reason, by substituting the fictions and artificial systems of theologians for the plain precepts of love, and justice, and humility, and filial trust in God. As long as it was supposed, that religion is to benefit the world by laying restraints, awakening fears, and acting as a part of the system of police, so long it was natural to rely on authority and tradition as the means of its propagation; so long it was desirable to stifle thought and inquiry on the subject. But now that we have learned, that the true office of religion is to awaken pure and lofty sentiments, and to unite man to God by rational homage and enlightened love, there is something monstrous in placing religion beyond the thought and the study of the mass of the human race.

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#### MORAL ENERGY ENDANGERED BY SOCIETY.

All virtue lies in individual action, in inward energy, in self-determination. There is no moral worth in being swept away by a crowd, even

towards the best objects. We must act from an inward spring. The good, as well as the bad, may injure us, if, through that intolerance which is a common infirmity of the good, they impose on us authoritatively their own convictions, and obstruct our own intellectual and moral activity. A state of society, in which correct habits prevail, may produce in many, a mechanical regularity and religion, which is anything but virtue. Nothing morally great or good springs from mere sympathy and imitation. These principles will only forge chains for us, and perpetuate our infancy, unless more and more controlled and subdued by that inward lawgiver and judge, whose authority is from God, and whose sway over our whole nature, alone secures its free, glorious, and everlasting expansion.

The truth is, and we need to feel it most deeply, that our connexion with society, as it is our greatest aid, so it is our greatest peril. We are in constant danger of being spoiled of our moral judgment, and of our power over ourselves; and in losing these, we lose the chief prerogatives of spiritual beings. We sink, as far as mind can sink, into the world of matter, the chief distinction of which is, that it wants self-motion, or moves only from foreign impulse. The propensity in our fellow-creatures, which we have most to dread, is that, which though severely condemned by Jesus, is yet the most frequent infirmity of his followers; we mean, the propensity to rule, to tyrannise, to war with the freedom of their equals, to make themselves standards for other minds, to be law-givers instead of brethren and friends to their race. Our great and most difficult duty as social beings, is, to derive constant

aid from society without taking its yoke; to open our minds to the thoughts, reasonings, and persuasions of others, and yet to hold fast the sacred right of private judgment; to receive impulses from our fellow-beings, and yet to act from our own souls; to sympathise with others, and yet to determine our own feelings; to act with others, and yet to follow our own consciences; to unite social deference and self-dominion; to join moral self-subsistence with social dependence; to respect others without losing self-respect; to love our friends, and to reverence our superiors, whilst our supreme homage is given to that moral perfection which no friend and no superior has realised, and which, if faithfully pursued, will often demand separation from all around us. Such is our great work as social beings, and to perform it, we should look habitually to Jesus Christ, who was distinguished by nothing more than by moral independence, than by resisting and overcoming the world.

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#### THE CHILD AND THE WORLD.

The child is not put into the hands of parents alone. It is not born to hear but a few voices. It is brought at birth into a vast, we may say, an infinite school. The universe is charged with the office of its education. Innumerable voices come to it from all that it meets, sees, feels. It is not confined to a few books, anxiously selected for it by parental care. Nature, society, experience, are volumes opened everywhere and perpetually before its eyes. It takes lessons from every object within the sphere of its senses and its activity, from the sun and stars, from the flowers of spring and the fruits of autumn, from

every associate, from every smiling and frowning countenance, from the pursuits, trades, professions of the community in which it moves, from its plays, friendships, and dislikes, from the varieties of human character, and from the consequences of its actions. All these, and more than these, are appointed to teach, awaken, develop the mind of the child. It is plunged amidst friendly and hostile influences, to grow by co-operating with the first, and by resisting the last.

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#### THE TREATMENT OF A CHILD.

Inward life, force, activity, this it must be our aim to call forth and build up in all our teachings of the young, especially in religious teaching. You must never forget, my friends, whether parents or Sunday-School instructors, what kind of a being you are acting upon. Never forget that the child is a rational, moral, free being, and that the great end of education is to awaken rational and moral energy within him, and to lead him to the free choice of the right, to the free determination of himself to truth and duty. The child is not a piece of wax to be moulded at another's pleasure, not a stone to be hewn passively into any shape which the caprice and interest of others may dictate; but a living, thinking being, made to act from principles in his own heart, to distinguish for himself between good and evil, between truth and falsehood, to form himself, to be in an important sense the author of his own character, the determiner of his own future being. This most important view of the child, should never forsake the teacher. He is a free moral agent, and our end should be to develop such a being. He must not be



treated as if he were unthinking matter. You can make a house, a ship, a statue, without its own consent. You determine the machines which you form wholly by your own will. The child has a will as well as yourselves. The great design of his being is, that he should act *from* himself and *on* himself. He can understand the perfection of his nature, and is created that he may accomplish it from choice, from a sense of duty, from his own deliberate purpose.

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#### THE WORTHLESSNESS OF MERE LEARNING.

How little does it avail us to study the outward world, if its greatness inspire no reverence of its Author, if its beneficence awaken no kindred love towards our fellow-creatures! How little does it avail us to study history, if the past do not help us to comprehend the dangers and duties of the present; if from the sufferings of those who have gone before us, we do not learn how to suffer, and from their great and good deeds how to act nobly; if the development of the human heart, in different ages and countries, do not give us a better knowledge of ourselves! How little does literature benefit us, if the sketches of life and character, the generous sentiments, the testimonies to disinterestedness and rectitude, with which it abounds, do not incite and guide us to wiser, purer, and more graceful action! How little substantial good do we derive from poetry and the fine arts, if the beauty which delights the imagination, do not warm and refine the heart, and raise us to the love and admiration of what is fair, and perfect, and lofty, in character and life! Let our studies be as wide as our condition will allow; but let this be their highest



aim, to instruct us in our duty and happiness, in the perfection of our nature, in the true use of life, in the best direction of our powers. Then is the culture of intellect an unmixed good, when it is sacredly used to enlighten the conscience, to feed the flame of generous sentiment, to perfect us in our common employments, to throw a grace over our common actions, to make us sources of innocent cheerfulness and centres of holy influences, and to give us courage, strength, stability, amidst the sudden changes and sore temptations and trials of life.

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#### RELIGION.

Religion demands, that He who is supreme in the universe, should be supreme in the human soul. God, to whom belongs the mysterious and incommunicable attribute of Infinity; who is the fulness and source of life and thought, of beauty and power, of love and happiness; on whom we depend more intimately than the stream on the fountain, or the plant on the earth in which it is rooted,—this Great Being ought to call forth peculiar emotions, and to move and sway the soul, as he pervades creation, with unrivalled energy. It is his distinction, that he unites in his nature infinite majesty and infinite benignity, the most awful with the most endearing attributes, the tenderest relations to the individual with the grandeur of the universal sovereign; and, through this nature, he is fitted to act on the mind as no other being can,—to awaken a love more intense, a veneration more profound, a sensibility of which the soul knows not its capacity until it is penetrated and touched by God. To bring the created mind into living union with

the Infinite Mind, so that it shall respond to him through its whole being, is the noblest function which this harmonious and beneficent universe performs. For this, revelation was given.

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#### THE RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE.

When we look into ourselves we discover powers, which link us with this outward, visible, finite, ever-changing world. We have sight and other senses to discern, and limbs and various faculties to secure and appropriate the material creation. And we have too, a power, which cannot stop at what we see and handle, at what exists within the bounds of space and time, which seeks for the Infinite, Uncreated Cause, which cannot rest till it ascend to the Eternal All-comprehending Mind. This we call the religious principle, and its grandeur cannot be exaggerated by human language; for it marks out a being destined for a higher communion than with the visible universe. To develop this, is eminently to educate ourselves. The true idea of God, unfolded clearly and livingly within us, and moving us to adore and obey him, and to aspire after likeness to him, is the noblest growth in human, and, I may add, in celestial natures.

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#### RELIGION A PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN NATURE.

Religion was an earlier bond and a deeper foundation of society than government. It was the root of civilization. It has founded the mightiest empires; and yet men question whether religion be an element, a principle of human nature!

Our nature is perpetually developing new senses, for the perception and enjoyment of God.

The human race, as it advances, does not leave religion behind it, as it leaves the shelter of caves and forests; does not outgrow faith, does not see it fading like the mist before its rising intelligence. On the contrary, religion opens before the improved mind in new grandeur. God, whom uncivilized man had narrowed into a local and tutelar Deity, rises with every advance of knowledge to a loftier throne, and is seen to sway a mightier sceptre. The soul, in proportion as it enlarges its faculties and refines its affections, possesses and discerns within itself a more and more glorious type of the Divinity, learns his spirituality in its own spiritual powers, and offers him a profounder and more inward worship. Thus deep is the foundation of worship in human nature. Men may assail it, may reason against it, but sooner can the laws of the outward universe be repealed by human will, sooner can the sun be plucked from his sphere, than the idea of God can be erased from the human spirit, and his worship banished from the earth. All other wants of man are superficial. His animal wants are but for a day, and are to cease with the body. The profoundest of all human wants is the want of God. Mind, spirit, must tend to its source. It cannot find happiness but in the perfect Mind, the Infinite Spirit. Worship has survived all revolutions. Corrupted, dishonoured, opposed, it yet lives. It is immortal as its Object, immortal as the soul from which it ascends.

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#### THE GREAT MYSTERY OF RELIGION.

There is in religion a great mystery. I refer to the doctrine of Free-will or moral liberty. How to reconcile this with God's foreknowledge

and human dependence, is a question which has perplexed the greatest minds. It is probable, that much of the obscurity arises from our applying to God the same kind of foreknowledge as men possess by their acquaintance with causes, and from our supposing the Supreme Being to bear the same relation to time as man. It is probable that juster views on these subjects will relieve the freedom of the will from some of its difficulties. Still the difficulties attending it are great. It is a mystery in the popular sense of the word. Now is it not strange that theologians who have made and swallowed so many other mysteries, have generally rejected this, and rejected it on the ground of objections less formidable than those which may be urged against their own inventions? A large part of the Protestant world have sacrificed man's freedom of will to God's foreknowledge and sovereignty, thus virtually subverting all religion, all duty, all responsibility. They have made man a machine, and destroyed the great distinction between him and the brute.

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#### RELIGION A QUICKENING POWER.

To this belongs pre-eminently the work of freeing, and elevating the mind. All other means are comparatively impotent. The sense of God is the only spring, by which the crushing weight of sense, of the world, and temptation, can be withstood. Without a consciousness of our relation to God, all other relations will prove adverse to spiritual life and progress. I have spoken of the religious sentiment as the mightiest agent on earth. It has accomplished more, it has strengthened men to do and suffer more, than

all other principles. It can sustain the mind against all other powers. Of all principles, it is the deepest, the most ineradicable. In its perversion, indeed, it has been fruitful of crime and woe; but the very energy which it has given to the passions, when they have mixed with and corrupted it, teaches us the omnipotence with which it is imbued.

Religion gives life, strength, elevation to the mind by connecting it with the Infinite Mind; by teaching it to regard itself as the offspring and care of the Infinite Father, who created it that he might communicate to it his own spirit and perfections, who framed it for truth and virtue, who framed it for himself, who subjects it to sore trials, that by conflict and endurance it may grow strong, and who has sent his Son to purify it from every sin, and to clothe it with immortality. It is religion alone, which nourishes patient, resolute hopes and efforts for our own souls. Without it, we can hardly escape self-contempt, and the contempt of our race. Without God, our existence has no support, our life no aim, our improvements no permanence, our best labours no sure and enduring results, our spiritual weakness no power to lean upon, and our noblest aspirations and desires no pledge of being realized in a better state. Struggling virtue has no friend; suffering virtue no promise of victory. Take away God, and life becomes mean, and man poorer than the brute.

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#### THE GLORY OF RELIGION.

Why has the Creator sent his Son to make himself known? I answer, God is most worthy to be known, because he is the most quickening,



purifying, and ennobling object for the mind ; and his great purpose in revealing himself, is that he may exalt and perfect human nature. God, as he is manifested by Christ, is another name for intellectual and moral excellence ; and in the knowledge of him, our intellectual and moral powers find their element, nutriment, strength, expansion, and happiness. To know God is to attain to the sublimest conception in the universe. To love God, is to bind ourselves to a being, who is fitted, as no other being is, to penetrate and move our whole hearts ; in loving whom, we exalt ourselves ; in loving whom, we love the great, the good, the beautiful, and the infinite ; and under whose influence, the soul unfolds itself as a perennial plant under the cherishing sun. This constitutes the chief glory of religion. It ennobles the soul. In this its unrivalled dignity and happiness consist.

Men have been virtually taught to glorify God by flattery, rather than by becoming excellent and glorious themselves, and thus doing honour to their maker. Our dependence on God, has been so taught as to extinguish the consciousness of our free nature and moral power.

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#### GOD'S CONNEXION WITH HIS CREATURES.

The danger to which we are most exposed, is that of severing the Creator from his creatures. The propensity of human sovereigns to cut off communication between themselves and their subjects, and to disclaim a common nature with their inferiors, has led the multitude of men, who think of God chiefly under the character of a king, to conceive of him as a being who places his glory in multiplying distinctions between



himself and all other beings. The truth is, that the union between the Creator and the creature surpasses all other bonds in strength and intimacy. He penetrates all things and delights to irradiate all with his glory. Nature, in its lowest and inanimate forms, is pervaded by his power; and when quickened by the mysterious property of life, how wonderfully does it show forth the perfections of its author! How much of God may be seen in the structure of a single leaf, which, though so frail as to tremble in every wind, yet holds connexions and living communications with the earth, the air, the clouds, and the distant sun, and, through these sympathies with the universe, is itself a revelation of an omnipotent mind! God delights to diffuse himself everywhere. Through his energy, unconscious matter clothes itself with proportions, powers, and beauties, which reflect his wisdom and love. How much more must he delight to frame conscious and happy recipients of his perfections, in whom his wisdom and love may substantially dwell, with whom he may form spiritual ties, and to whom he may be an everlasting spring of moral energy and happiness? How far the Supreme Being may communicate his attributes to his intelligent offspring, I stop not to enquire. But that his almighty goodness will impart to them powers and glories, of which the material universe is but a faint emblem, I cannot doubt. That the soul, if true to itself and its maker, will be filled with God, and will manifest him, more than that sun, I cannot doubt. Who can doubt it, that believes and understands the doctrine of human immortality?

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## THE TRUE VIEW OF RELIGION.

What then is religion? I answer, it is not the adoration of a God with whom we have no common properties; of a distinct, foreign, separate being; but of an all-communicating Parent. It recognises and adores God, as a being whom we know through our own souls, who has made man in his own image, who is the perfection of our own spiritual nature, who has sympathies with us as kindred beings, who is near us, not in place only like this all-surrounding atmosphere, but by spiritual influence and love, who looks on us with parental interest, and whose great design is to communicate to us forever, and in freer and fuller streams, his own power, goodness, and joy. The conviction of this near and ennobling relation of God to the soul, and of his great purposes towards it, belongs to the very essence of true religion; and true religion manifests itself chiefly and most conspicuously in desires, hopes, and efforts corresponding to this truth.

That religion has been so dispensed as to depress the human mind, I need not tell you; and it is a truth which ought to be known, that the greatness of the Deity, when separated in our thoughts from his parental character, especially tends to crush human energy and hope. To a frail dependent creature, an omnipotent Creator easily becomes a terror, and his worship easily degenerates into servility, flattery, self-contempt, and selfish calculation. Religion only ennobles us, in as far as it reveals to us the tender and intimate connexion of God with his creatures, and teaches us to see in the very greatness which might give alarm, the source of great and glorious

communications to the human soul. You cannot, my hearers, think too highly of the majesty of God. But let not this majesty sever him from you. Remember, that his greatness is the infinity of attributes which yourselves possess. Adore his infinite wisdom; but remember that this wisdom rejoices to diffuse itself, and let an exhilarating hope spring up, at the thought of the immeasurable intelligence which such a Father must communicate to his children. In like manner adore his power. Let the boundless creation fill you with awe and admiration of the energy which sustains it. But remember that God has a nobler work than the outward creation, even the spirit within yourselves; and that it is his purpose to replenish this with his own energy, and to crown it with growing power and triumphs over the material universe. Above all adore his unutterable goodness. But remember, that this attribute is particularly proposed to you as your model; that God calls you, both by nature and revelation, to a fellowship in his philanthropy; that he has placed you in social relations, for the very end of rendering you ministers and representatives of his benevolence; that he even summons you to espouse and to advance the sublimest purpose of his goodness, the redemption of the human race, by extending the knowledge and power of Christian truth. It is through such views, that religion raises up the soul, and binds man by ennobling bonds to his Maker.

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#### THE GREAT PURPOSE OF WORSHIP.

Why is it, my hearers, that God has discovered such solicitude, if I may use the word, to make

himself known and obtain our worship? Think you, that he calls us to adore him from a love of homage or service? Has God man's passion for ruling, man's thirst for applause, man's desire to have his name shouted by crowds? Could the acclamations of the universe, though concentrated into one burst of praise, give our Creator a new or brighter consciousness of his own majesty and goodness? Oh! no. He has manifested himself to us, because, in the knowledge and adoration of his perfections, our own intellectual and moral perfection is found. What he desires, is, not our subjection, but our excellence. He has no love of praise. He calls us as truly to honour goodness in others as in himself, and only claims supreme honour, because he transcends all others, and because he communicates to the mind which receives him, a light, strength, purity, which no other being can confer. God has no love of empire. It could give him no pleasure to have his footstool worn by the knees of infinite hosts. It is to make us his children in the highest sense of that word, to make us more and more the partakers of his own nature, not to multiply slaves, that he hath sent his Son to make himself known. God indeed is said to seek his own glory; but the glory of a creator must consist in the glory of his works; and we may be assured, that he cannot wish any recognition of himself, but that which will perfect his noblest, highest work, the immortal mind.

Do not, my friends, forget the great end for which Christ enjoins on us the worship of God. It is not, that we may ingratiate ourselves with an almighty agent, whose frown is destruction. It is, that we may hold communion with an in-

telligence and goodness, infinitely surpassing our own ; that we may rise above imperfect and finite natures ; that we may attach ourselves by love and reverence to the best Being in the universe ; and that through veneration and love, we may receive into our own minds the excellence, disinterestedness, wisdom, purity, and power, which we adore. This reception of the divine attributes, I desire especially to hold forth, as the most glorious end for which God reveals himself. To praise him is not enough. That homage, which has no power to assimilate us to him, is of little or no worth. The truest admiration is that by which we receive other minds into our own. True praise is a sympathy with excellence, gaining strength by utterance. Such is the praise which God demands. Then only is the purpose of Christ's revelation of God accomplished, when, by reception of the doctrine of a Paternal Divinity, we are quickened to "follow him, as dear children," and are "filled with his fulness," and become "his temples," and "dwell in God, and have God dwelling in ourselves. . .

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#### THE GREAT OBJECT OF THE UNIVERSE.

It is the mark of a weak mind, to make an idol of order and method ; to cling to established forms of business, when they clog instead of advancing it. If, then, the great purposes of the universe can best be accomplished by departing from its established laws, these laws will undoubtedly be suspended ; and though broken in the letter, they will be observed in their spirit, for the ends for which they were first instituted will be advanced by their violation. Now the question arises, for what purposes were nature



and its order appointed? and there is no presumption in saying, that the highest of these is the improvement of intelligent beings. Mind (by which we mean both moral and intellectual powers) is God's first end. The great purpose for which an order of nature is fixed, is plainly the formation of Mind. In a creation without order, where events would follow without any regular succession, it is obvious, that Mind must be kept in perpetual infancy; for in such a universe, there could be no reasoning from effects to causes, no induction to establish general truths, no adaptation of means to ends; that is, no science relating to God, or matter, or mind; no action; no virtue. The great purpose of God, then, I repeat it, in establishing the order of nature, is to form and advance the mind; and if the case should occur, in which the interests of the mind could best be advanced by departing from this order, or by miraculous agency, then the great purpose of the creation, the great end of its laws and regularity, would demand such departure; and miracles, instead of warring against, would concur with nature.

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DISTRUST OF MIRACLES AN ATHEISTICAL  
FEELING.

I have considered the objections to miracles in general; and I would close with observing, that these objections will lose their weight, just in proportion as we strengthen our conviction of God's power over nature, and of his paternal interest in his creatures. The great repugnance to the belief of miraculous agency, is found in a lurking atheism, which ascribes supremacy to nature, and which, whilst it professes to believe



in God, questions his tender concern for the improvement of men. To a man who cherishes a sense of God, the great difficulty is, not to account for miracles, but to account for their rare occurrence. One of the mysteries of the universe is this, that its Author retires so continually behind the veil of his works, that the great and good Father does not manifest himself more distinctly to his creatures. There is something like coldness and repulsiveness, in instructing us only by fixed, inflexible laws of nature. The intercourse of God with Adam and the patriarchs, suits our best conceptions of the relation which he bears to the human race, and ought not to surprise us more, than the expression of a human parent's tenderness and concern towards his offspring.

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#### THE LITTLENESS OF SCEPTICISM.

Scepticism is essentially a narrowness of mind, which makes the present moment the measure of the past and future. It is the creature of sense. In the midst of a boundless universe, it can conceive no mode of operation but what falls under its immediate observation. The visible, the present is every thing to the unbeliever. Let him but enlarge his views; let him look round on the immensity of the universe; let him consider the infinity of resources which are comprehended in omnipotence; let him represent to himself the manifold stages through which the human race is appointed to pass; let him remember that the education of the ever-growing mind must require a great variety of discipline; and especially let him admit the sublime thought, of which the germ is found in nature, that man was created to be trained for, and to ascend to an

incomparably higher order of existence than the present,—and he will see the childishness of making his narrow experience the standard of all that is past and is to come in human history.

It is strange indeed that men of science should fall into this error. The improved science of the present day teaches them, that this globe of ours, which seems so unchangeable, is not now what it was a few thousand years ago. They find proofs by digging into the earth, that this globe was inhabited before the existence of the human race, by classes of animals which have perished, and the ocean peopled by races now unknown, and that the human race are occupying a ruined and restored world. Men of science should learn to free themselves from the vulgar narrowness which sees nothing in the past but the present, and should learn the stupendous and infinite variety of the dispensations of God.

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#### THE EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES.

I would only observe, that they may all be resolved into this single principle, namely, that the Christian miracles were originally believed under such circumstances, that this belief can only be explained by their actual occurrence. That Christianity was received at first on the ground of miracles, and that its first preachers and converts proved the depth and strength of their conviction of these facts, by attesting them in sufferings and in death, we know from the most ancient records which relate to this religion, both Christian and Heathen; and, in fact, this conviction can alone explain their adherence to Christianity. Now, that this conviction could only have sprung from the reality of the miracles,

we infer from the known circumstances of these witnesses, whose passions, interests, and strongest prejudices, were originally hostile to the new religion; whose motive for examining with care the facts on which it rested, were as urgent and solemn, and whose means and opportunities of ascertaining their truth were as ample and un-failing, as can be conceived to conspire; so that the supposition of their falsehood cannot be admitted, without subverting our trust in human judgment and human testimony under the most favourable circumstances for discovering truth; that is without introducing universal scepticism.

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#### CHRISTIANITY A RATIONAL RELIGION.

It has been strenuously maintained, that Christianity contains particular doctrines which are irrational, and which involve the whole religion to which they are essential, in their own condemnation. To this class of objections I have a short reply. I insist that these offensive doctrines do not belong to Christianity, but are human additions, and therefore do not derogate from its reasonableness and truth. What is the doctrine most frequently adduced to fix the charge of irrationality on the gospel? It is the Trinity. This is pronounced by the unbeliever a gross offence to reason. It teaches that there is one God, and yet that there are three divine persons. According to the doctrine, these three persons perform different offices, and sustain different relations to each other. One is Father, another his Son. One sends, another is sent. They love each other, converse with each other, and make a covenant with each other; and yet, with all these distinctions, they are, according to

the doctrine, not different beings, but one being, one and the same God. Is this a rational doctrine? has often been the question of the objector to Christianity. I answer, No. I can as easily believe that the whole human race are one man, as that three infinite persons, performing such different offices, are one God. But I maintain, that, because the Trinity is irrational, it does not follow that the same reproach belongs to Christianity; for this doctrine is no part of the Christian religion. I know, there are passages which are continually quoted in its defence; but allow me to prove doctrines in the same way, that is, by detaching texts from their connexion and interpreting them without reference to the general current of Scripture, and I can prove anything and everything from the Bible. I can prove, that God has human passions. I can prove transubstantiation, which is taught much more explicitly than the Trinity. Detached texts prove nothing. Christ is called God; the same title is given to Moses and to rulers. Christ has said, "I and my Father are one;" so he prayed that all his disciples might be one, meaning not one and the same being, but one in affection and purpose. I ask you, before you judge on this point, to read the Scriptures as a whole, and to inquire into their general strain and teaching in regard to Christ. I find him uniformly distinguishing between himself and God, calling himself not God the Son, but the Son of God, continually speaking of himself as sent by God, continually referring his power and miracles to God. I hear him saying, that of himself he can do nothing, and praying to his Father under the character of the only true God. Such I affirm

to be the tenor, the current, the general strain of the New Testament; and the scattered passages, on which a different doctrine is built, should have no weight against this host of witnesses. Do not rest your faith on a few texts. Sometimes these favourite texts are no part of Scripture. For example, the famous passage on which the Trinity mainly rests, "There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one,"—this text, I say, though found at present in John's Epistle, and read in our churches, has been pronounced by the ablest critics a forgery? and a vast majority of the educated ministers of this country are satisfied, that it is not a part of Scripture. Suffer no man, then, to select texts for you as decisive of religious controversies. Read the whole record for yourselves, and possess yourselves of its general import. I am very desirous to separate the doctrine in question from Christianity, because it fastens the charge of irrationality on the whole religion. It is one of the great obstacles to the propagation of the Gospel. The Jews will not hear of a Trinity. I have seen in the countenance, and heard in the tones of the voice, the horror with which that people shrink from the doctrine, that God died on the cross. Mahometans, too, when they hear this opinion from Christian missionaries, repeat the first article of their faith, "There is one God;" and look with pity or scorn on the disciples of Jesus, as deserters of the plainest and greatest truth of religion. Even the Indian of our wilderness, who worships the Great Spirit, has charged absurdity on the teacher who has gone to indoctrinate him in a Trinity. How many, too, in



Christian countries, have suspected the whole religion for this one error. Believing, then, as I do, that it forms no part of Christianity, my allegiance to Jesus Christ calls me openly to withstand it. In so doing, I would wound no man's feelings. I doubt not, that they who adopt this doctrine intend, equally with those who oppose it, to render homage to truth, and service to Christianity. They think that their peculiar faith gives new interest to the character and new authority to the teaching of Jesus. But they grievously err. The views, by which they hope to build up love towards Christ, detract from the perfection of his Father; and I fear, that the kind of piety, which prevails now in the Christian world, bears witness to the sad influence of this obscuration of the true glory of God. We need not desert reason or corrupt Christianity, to ensure the purest, deepest love towards the only true God, or towards Jesus Christ, whom he has sent for our redemption.

I have named one doctrine, which is often urged against Christianity as irrational. There is one more on which I would offer a few remarks. Christianity has often been reproached with teaching, that God brings men into life totally depraved, and condemns immense multitudes to everlasting misery for sins to which their nature has irresistibly impelled them. This is said to be irrational, and consequently such must be the religion which teaches it. I certainly shall not attempt to vindicate this theological fiction. A more irrational doctrine could not, I think, be contrived; and it is something worse; it is as immoral in its tendency, as it is unreasonable. It is suited to alienate men from God



and from one another. Were it really believed (which it cannot be,) men would look up with dread and detestation to the Author of their being, and look round with horror on their fellow-creatures. It would dissolve society. Were men to see in one another wholly corrupt beings, incarnate fiends, without one genuine virtue, society would become as repulsive as a den of lions or a nest of vipers. All confidence, esteem, love, would die; and without these, the interest, charm, and worth of existence would expire. What a pang would shoot through a parent's heart, if he were to see in the smiling infant a moral being continually and wholly propense to sin, in whose mind were thickly sown the seeds of hatred to God and goodness, and who had commenced his existence under the curse of his Creator. What good man could consent to be a parent, if his offspring were to be born to this infinitely wretched inheritance? I say, the doctrine is of immoral tendency; but I do not say that they who profess it are immoral. The truth is, that none do or can hold it in its full and proper import.

Christianity indeed speaks strongly of human guilt, but always treats men as beings who have the power of doing right, and who have come into existence under the smile of their Creator.

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#### THE GREAT PRINCIPLE OF THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

All the evidences of Christianity may be traced to this great principle, that every effect must have an adequate cause. We claim for our religion a divine original, because no adequate cause for it can be found in the powers or passions of human

nature, or in the circumstances under which it appeared; because it can only be accounted for by the interposition of that Being, to whom its first preachers universally ascribed it, and with whose nature it perfectly agrees.

Christianity, by which we mean not merely the doctrines of the religion, but everything relating to it, its rise, its progress, the character of its author, the conduct of its propagators—Christianity, in this broad sense, can only be accounted for in two ways. It either sprung from the principles of human nature, under the excitements, motives, impulses of the age in which it was first preached; or it had its origin in a higher and supernatural agency. To which of these causes the religion should be referred, is not a question beyond our reach; for being partakers of human nature, and knowing more of it than of any other part of creation, we can judge with sufficient accuracy of the operation of its principles, and of the effects to which they are competent. It is indeed true, that human powers are not exactly defined, nor can we state precisely the bounds, beyond which they cannot pass; but still, the disproportion between human nature and an effect ascribed to it, may be so vast and palpable, as to satisfy us at once, that the effect is inexplicable by human power. I know not precisely what advances may be made by the intellect of an unassisted savage; but that a savage in the woods could not compose the *Principia* of Newton, is about as plain as that he could not create the world. I know not the point at which bodily strength must stop; but that a man cannot carry Atlas or Andes on his shoulders, is a safe position. The question,

therefore, whether the principles of human nature under the circumstances in which it was placed at Christ's birth, will explain his religion, is one to which we are competent, and is the great question on which the whole controversy turns.

Now we maintain, that a great variety of facts belonging to this religion,—such as the character of its founder; its peculiar principles; the style and character of its records; its progress; the conduct, circumstances, and sufferings of its first propagators; the reception of it from the first on the ground of miraculous attestations; the prophecies it fulfilled and which it contains; its influence on society, and other circumstances connected with it—are utterly inexplicable by human powers and principles, but accord with and are fully explained by the power and perfections of God.

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#### THE JEWS OF OUR SAVIOUR'S AGE.

The truth is, Christ lived in a [state of society singularly remote from our own. Of all nations, the Jewish was the most strongly marked. The Jew hardly felt himself to belong to the human family. He was accustomed to speak of himself as chosen by God, holy, clean; whilst the Gentiles were sinners, dogs, polluted, unclean. His common dress, the phylactery on his brow or arm, the hem of his garment, his food, the ordinary circumstances of his life, as well as his temple, his sacrifices, his ablutions, all held him up to himself, as a peculiar favourite of God, and all separated him from the rest of the world. With other nations he could not eat or marry. They were unworthy of his communion. Still, with all these notions of

superiority, he saw himself conquered by those whom he despised. He was obliged to wear the shackles of Rome, to see Roman legions in his territory, a Roman guard near his temple, and a Roman tax-gatherer extorting, for the support of an idolatrous government and an idolatrous worship, what he regarded as due only to God. The hatred which burned in the breast of the Jew towards his foreign oppressor, perhaps never glowed with equal intenseness in any other conquered state. He had, however, his secret consolation. The time was near, the prophetic age was at hand, when Judea was to break her chains and rise from the dust. Her long promised king and deliverer was near, and was coming to wear the crown of universal empire. From Jerusalem was to go forth his law, and all nations were to serve the chosen people of God. To this conqueror the Jews indeed ascribed the office of promoting religion; but the religion of Moses, corrupted into an outward service, was to them the perfection of human nature. They clung to its forms with the whole energy of their souls. To the Mosaic institution, they ascribed their distinction from all other nations. It lay at the foundation of their hopes of dominion. I believe no strength of prejudice ever equalled the intense attachment of the Jew to his peculiar national religion. You may judge of its power by the fact of its having been transmitted through so many ages, amidst persecution and sufferings which would have subdued any spirit but that of a Jew. You must bring these things to your mind. You must place yourself in the midst of these singular people.

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## CHRIST'S CHARACTER A PROOF OF HIS GOSPEL.

Among this singular people, burning with impatient expectation, appeared Jesus of Nazareth. His first words were, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." These words we hear with little emotion; but to the Jews who had been watching for this kingdom for ages, and who were looking for its immediate manifestation, they must have been awakening as an earthquake. Accordingly we find Jesus thronged by multitudes which no building could contain. He repairs to a mountain, as affording him advantages for addressing the crowd. I see them surrounding him with eager looks, and ready to drink in every word from his lips. And what do I hear? Not one word of Judea, of Rome, of freedom, of conquest, of the glories of God's chosen people, and of the thronging of all nations to the temple on Mount Zion. Almost every word was a death-blow to the hopes and feelings, which glowed through the whole people, and were consecrated under the name of religion. He speaks of the long-expected Kingdom of Heaven; but speaks of it as a felicity promised to, and only to be partaken by, the humble and pure in heart. The righteousness of the Pharisees, that which was deemed the perfection of religion, and which the new deliverer was expected to spread far and wide, he pronounces worthless, and declares the kingdom of Heaven, or of the Messiah, to be shut against all who do not cultivate a new, spiritual, and disinterested virtue. Instead of war and victory, he commands his impatient hearers to love, to forgive, to bless their enemies; and holds forth this spirit of benignity, mercy, peace, as the special badge of the people



of the true Messiah. Instead of national interests and glories, he commands them to seek first a spirit of impartial charity and love, unconfined by the bounds of tribe or nation, and proclaims this to be the happiness and honour of the reign for which they hoped. Instead of this world's riches, which they expected to flow from all lands into their own, he commands them to lay up treasures in heaven, and directs them to an incorruptible, immortal life, as the true end of their being. Nor is this all. He does not merely offer himself as a spiritual deliverer, as the founder of a new empire of inward piety and universal charity; he closes with language announcing a more mysterious office. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Here I meet the annunciation of a character as august as it must have been startling. I hear him foretelling a dominion to be exercised in the future world. He begins to announce, what entered largely into his future teaching, that his power was not bounded to this earth. These words I better understand, when I hear him subsequently declaring, that after a painful death, he was to rise again and ascend to heaven, and there, in a state of pre-eminent power and glory, was to be the advocate and judge of the human race.

Such are some of the views given by Jesus, of his character and reign, in the Sermon on the Mount. Immediately afterwards, I hear another lesson from him, bringing out some of these truths still more strongly. A Roman centurion makes



application to him for the cure of a servant, whom he particularly valued; and on expressing in a strong manner, his conviction of the power of Jesus to heal at a distance, Jesus, according to the historian, “ marvelled, and said to those that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith in Israel; and I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom” (that is, the Jews) “ shall be cast out.” Here all the hopes which the Jews had cherished of an exclusive or peculiar possession of the Messiah’s kingdom, were crushed; and the reception of the despised Gentile world to all his blessings, or, in other words, the extension of his pure religion to the ends of the earth, began to be proclaimed.

I ask you, whether the character of Jesus be not the most extraordinary in history, and wholly inexplicable on human principles.

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#### THE HEAVENLY ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

I believe Christianity to be true, or to have come from God, because it seems to me impossible to trace it to any other origin. It must have had a cause, and no other adequate cause can be assigned. The incongruity between this religion and all the circumstances amidst which it grew up, is so remarkable, that we are compelled to look beyond and above this world for its explanation. When I go back to the origin of Christianity, and place myself in the age and country of its birth, I can find nothing in the opinions of men, or in the state of society, which can account for its beginning or diffusion. There was no

power on earth to create or uphold such a system. There was nothing congenial with it in Judaism, in heathenism, or in the state of society among the most cultivated communities. If you study the religions, governments, and philosophical systems of that age, you will discover in them not even a leaning towards Christianity. It sprung up in opposition to all, making no compromise with human prejudice or passion; and it sprung up, not only superior to all, but possessing at its very beginning a perfection, which has been the admiration of ages, and which, instead of being dimmed by time, has come forth more brightly, in proportion to the progress of the human mind.

I know, indeed, that at the origin of our religion, the old heathen worship had fallen into disrepute among the enlightened classes through the Roman empire, and was gradually losing its hold on the populace. Accordingly some have pretended that Christianity grew from the ruins of the ancient faith. But this is not true; for the decline of the heathen systems was the product of causes singularly adverse to the origination of such a system as Christianity. One cause was the monstrous depravity of the age, which led multitudes to an utter scorn of religion in all its forms and restraints, and which prepared others to exchange their old worship for still grosser and more licentious superstitions, particularly for the magical arts of Egypt. Surely this corruption of manners, this wide-wasting moral pestilence, will not be considered by any as a germ of the Christian religion. Another principal agent in loosening the foundations of the old systems, was Philosophy, a noble effort

indeed of the human intellect, but one which did nothing to prepare the way for Christianity. The most popular systems of philosophy at the birth of Christianity were the Sceptical and the Epicurean, the former of which turned religion into a jest, denied the possibility of arriving at the truth, and cast the mind on an ocean of doubt in regard to every subject of inquiry; whilst the latter placed happiness in ease, inculcated a calm indifference both as to this world and the next, and would have set down the Christian doctrine of self-sacrifice, of suffering for truth and duty, as absolute insanity. Now, I ask in what single point do these systems touch Christianity, or what impulse could they have given to its invention? There was indeed another philosophical sect of a nobler character; I mean the Stoical. This maintained that virtue was the supreme good, and it certainly nurtured some firm and lofty spirits amidst the despotism which then ground all classes in the dust. But the self-reliance, sternness, apathy, and pride of the Stoic, his defiance and scorn of mankind, his want of sympathy with human suffering, and his extravagant exaggerations of his own virtue, placed this sect in singular opposition to Christianity; so that our religion might as soon have sprung from Scepticism and Epicureanism, as from Stoicism. There was another system if it be worthy of the name, which prevailed in Asia, and was not unknown to the Jews, often called the Oriental philosophy. But this, though certainly an improvement on the common heathenism, was visionary, and mystical, and placed happiness in an intuition or immediate perception of God, which was to be gained by contem-

plation and ecstacies, by emaciation of the body, and desertion of the world. I need not tell you how infinitely removed was the practical, benevolent spirit of Christianity, from this spurious sanctity and profitless enthusiasm. I repeat it, then, that the various causes which were silently operating against the established heathen systems in the time of Christ, had no tendency to suggest and spread such a religion as he brought, but were as truly hostile to it as the worst forms of heathenism.

We cannot find, then, the origin of Christianity in the heathen world. Shall we look for it in the Jewish? This topic is too familiar to need much exposition. You know the character, feelings, expectations of the descendants of Abraham at the appearing of Jesus; and you need not be told that a system, more opposed to the Jewish mind than that which he taught, cannot be imagined. There was nothing friendly to it in the soil or climate of Judea. As easily might the luxuriant trees of our forests spring from the sands of an Arabian desert. There was never perhaps a national character so deeply stamped as the Jewish. Ages after ages of unparalleled suffering have done little to wear away its indelible features. In the time of Jesus, the whole influence of education and religion was employed to fix it in every member of the state. In the bosom of this community, and among its humblest classes, sprung up Christianity, a religion as unfettered by Jewish prejudices, as untainted by the earthly, narrow views of the age, as if it had come from another world, Judaism was all around it, but did not mar it by one trace, or sully its brightness by a single

breath. Can we find, then, the cause of Christianity in the Jewish, any more than in the heathen world.

Christianity, I maintain, was not the growth of any of the circumstances, principles, or feelings of the age in which it appeared. In truth, one of the great distinctions of the Gospel is, that it did not *grow*. The conception, which filled the mind of Jesus, of a religion more spiritual, generous, comprehensive, and unworldly than Judaism, and destined to take its place, was not of gradual formation. We detect no signs of it, and no efforts to realise it, before his time; nor is there an appearance of its being gradually matured by Jesus himself. Christianity was delivered from the first in its full proportions, in a style of singular freedom and boldness, and without a mark of painful elaboration. This suddenness with which this religion broke forth, this maturity of the system at the very moment of its birth, this absence of gradual development seems to me a strong mark of its divine original. If Christianity be a human invention, then I can be pointed to something in the history of the age, which impelled and fitted the mind of its author to its production; then I shall be able to find some germ of it, some approximation to it, in the state of things amidst which it first appeared. How was it, that from thick darkness there burst forth at once a meridian light? Were I told that the sciences of the civilised world had sprung up to perfection at once, amidst a barbarous horde, I should pronounce it incredible. Nor can I easily believe, that Christianity, the religion of unbounded love, a religion which broke down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, and the



barriers between nations; which proclaimed one Universal Father, which abolished forms and substituted the worship of the soul, which condemned alike the false greatness of the Roman and the false holiness of the Jew, and which taught an elevation of virtue, that the growing knowledge of succeeding ages has made more admirable;—I say, I cannot easily believe that such a religion was suddenly, immediately struck out by human ingenuity, among a people distinguished by bigotry and narrowness of spirit, by superstitious reliance on outward worship, by hatred and scorn of other nations, and by the proud, impatient hope of soon bending all nations to their sway.

Christianity, I repeat it, was not the growth of the age in which it appeared. It had no sympathy with that age. It was the echo of no sect or people. It stood alone at the moment of its birth. It used not a word of conciliation. It stooped to no error or passion. It had its own tone, the tone of authority and superiority to the world. It struck at the root of what was everywhere called glory, reversed the judgments of all former ages, passed a condemning sentence on the idols of this world's admiration, and held forth, as the perfection of human nature, a spirit of love, so pure and divine, so free and full, so mild and forgiving, so invincible in fortitude, yet so tender in its sympathies, that even now few comprehend it in its extent and elevation. Such a religion had not its origin in this world.

I have thus sought to unfold one of the evidences of Christianity. Its incongruity with the age of its birth, its freedom from earthly mixtures, its original, unborrowed, solitary greatness, and



the suddenness with which it broke forth amidst the general gloom; these are to me strong indications of its divine descent. I cannot reconcile them with a human origin.

Next to the character of Christ, his religion might be shown to abound in circumstances which contradict and repel the idea of a human origin. For example, its representations of the paternal character of God; its inculcation of a universal charity; the stress which it lays on inward purity; its substitution of a spiritual worship for the forms and ceremonies, which everywhere had usurped the name and extinguished the life of religion; its preference of humility, and of the mild, unostentatious, passive virtues, to the dazzling qualities which had monopolised men's admiration; its consistent and bright discoveries of immortality; its adaptation to the wants of man as a sinner; its adaptation to all the conditions, capacities and sufferings of human nature; its pure, sublime, yet practical morality; its high and generous motives; and its fitness to form a character, which plainly prepares for a higher life than the present:—these are peculiarities of Christianity, which will strike us more and more, in proportion as we understand distinctly the circumstances of the age and country in which this religion appeared, and for which no adequate human cause has been or can be assigned.

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#### THE SUBLIMITY OF OUR LORD'S CHARACTER.

We probably have often read of the character which he claimed, without a thought of its extraordinary nature. But I know nothing so sublime. The plans and labours of statesmen

sink into the sports of children, when compared with the work which Jesus announced, and to which he devoted himself in life and death, with a thorough consciousness of its reality. The idea of changing the moral aspect of the whole earth, of recovering all nations to the pure and inward worship of one God, and to a spirit of divine and fraternal love, was one of which we meet not a trace in philosopher or legislator before him. The human mind had given no promise of this extent of view. The conception of this enterprise, and the calm, unshaken expectation of success, in one who had no station and no wealth, who cast from him the sword with abhorrence, and who forbade his disciples to use any weapons but those of love, discover a wonderful trust in the power of God and the power of love; and when to this we add, that Jesus looked not only to the triumph of his pure faith in the present world, but to a mighty and beneficent power in Heaven, we witness a vastness of purpose, a grandeur of thought and feeling, so original, so superior to the workings of all other minds, that nothing but our familiarity can prevent our contemplation of it with wonder and profound awe. I confess, when I can escape the deadening power of habit, and can receive the full import of such passages as the following, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"—"I am come to seek and to save that which was lost,"—"He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father in Heaven,"—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me before men, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of the Father with the holy

angels,"—"In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you;"—I say, when I can succeed in realising the import of such passages, I feel myself listening to a being, such as never before and never since spoke in human language. I am awed by the consciousness of greatness which these simple words express; and when I connect this greatness with the proofs of Christ's miracles, I am compelled to speak with the Centurion, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

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#### THE MISSION OF THE APOSTLES.

Jesus brought with him a new era, the era of philanthropy; and from his time a new spirit has moved over the troubled waters of society, and will move until it has brought order and beauty out of darkness and confusion. The men whom he trained, and into whom he had poured most largely his own spirit, were signs, proofs, that a new kingdom had come. They consecrated themselves to a work at that time without precedent, wholly original, such as had not entered human thought. They left home, possessions, country; went abroad into strange lands; and not only put life in peril, but laid it down, to spread the truth which they had received from their lord, to make the true God, even the Father, known to his blinded children, to make the Saviour known to the sinner, to make life and immortality known to the dying, to give a new impulse to the human soul. We read of the mission of the Apostles as if it were a thing of course. The thought perhaps never comes to us, that they entered on a sphere of action until that time wholly unexplored; that

not a track had previously marked their path; that the great conception which inspired them, of converting a world, had never dawned on the sublimest intellect; that the spiritual love for every human being, which carried them over oceans and through deserts, amidst scourgings and fastings, and imprisonments and death, was a new light from heaven breaking out on earth, a new revelation of the divinity in human nature. Then it was that man began to yearn for man with a godlike love. Then a new voice was heard on earth, the voice of prayer for the recovery, pardon, happiness of a world. It was most strange, it was a miracle more worthy of admiration than the raising of the dead, that from Judea, the most exclusive, narrow country under heaven, which hated and scorned all other nations, and shrunk from their touch as pollution, should go forth men to proclaim the doctrine of human brotherhood, to give to every human being, however fallen or despised, assurances of God's infinite love, to break down the barriers of nation and rank, to pour out their blood like water in the work of diffusing the spirit of universal love. Thus mightily did the character of Jesus act on the spirits of the men with whom he had lived.

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#### CHRISTIANITY ITS OWN EVIDENCE.

The miracles of Christianity have left effects, which equally attest their reality, and cannot be explained without them. I go back to the age of Jesus Christ, and I am immediately struck with the commencement and rapid progress of the most remarkable revolution in the annals of the world. I see a new religion, of a character

altogether its own, which bore no likeness to any past or existing faith, spreading in a few years through all civilized nations, and introducing a new era, a new state of society, a change of the human mind, which has broadly distinguished all following ages. Here is a plain fact, which the sceptic will not deny, however he may explain it. I see this religion issuing from an obscure, despised, hated people. Its founder had died on the cross, a mode of punishment as disgraceful as the pillory or gallows at the present day. Its teachers were poor men, without rank, office, or education, taken from the fishing-boat and other occupations which had never furnished teachers to mankind. I see these men beginning their work on the spot where their Master's blood had been shed, as of a common malefactor; and I hear them summoning first his murderers, and then all nations and all ranks, the sovereign on the throne, the priest in the temple, the great and the learned, as well as the poor and the ignorant, to renounce the faith and the worship which had been hallowed by the veneration of all ages, and to take the yoke of their crucified Lord. I see passion and prejudice, the sword of the magistrate, the curse of the priest, the scorn of the philosopher, and the fury of the populace, joined to crush this common enemy; and yet, without a human weapon and in opposition to all human power, I see the humble Apostles of Jesus winning their way, overpowering prejudice, breaking the ranks of their opposers, changing enemies into friends, breathing into multitudes a calm spirit of martyrdom, and carrying to the bounds of civilization and even in half-civilized regions, a religion which



has contributed to advance society more than all other causes combined. Here is the effect. Here is a monument more durable than pillars or triumphal arches. Now I ask for an explanation of these effects. If Jesus Christ and his Apostles were indeed sent and empowered by God, and wrought miracles in attestation of their mission, then the establishment of Christianity is explained. Suppose them, on the other hand, to have been insane enthusiasts, or selfish impostors, left to meet the whole strength of human opposition, with nothing but their own power or rather their own weakness, and you have no cause for the stupendous effect I have described. Such men could no more have changed the face of the world, than they could have turned back rivers to their sources, sunk mountains into valleys, or raised valleys to the skies. Christianity, then, has not only the evidence of unexceptionable witnesses, but that of effects; a proof which will grow stronger by comparing its progress with that of other religions, such as Mahometanism, which sprung from human passions, and were advanced by human power.

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THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES NEVER DESIGNED  
TO BE OVERWHELMING.

I have laid before you some of the principal evidences of Christianity. I have aimed to state them without exaggeration. That an honest mind, which thoroughly comprehends them, can deny their force, seems to me hardly possible. Stronger proofs may indeed be conceived, but it is doubtful, whether these could be given in consistency with our moral nature, and with the



moral government of God. Such a government requires, that truth should not be forced on the mind, but that we should be left to gain it, by an upright use of our understandings, and by conforming ourselves to what we have already learned. God might indeed shed on us an overpowering light, so that it would be impossible for us to lose our way ; but in so doing he would annihilate an important part of our present probation. It is then no objection to Christianity, that its evidences are not the very strongest which might be given, and that they do not extort universal assent. In this respect, it accords with other great truths. These are not forced on our belief. Whoever will, may shut his eyes on their proofs, and array against them objections. In the measure of evidence with which Christianity is accompanied, I see a just respect for the freedom of the mind, and a wise adaptation to that moral nature, which it is the great aim of this religion to carry forward to perfection.

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#### CHRISTIANITY ADAPTED TO THE SOUL.

When I look into the soul, I am at once struck with its immeasurable superiority to the body. I am struck with the contrast between these different elements of my nature, between this active, soaring mind, and these limbs, and material organs which tend perpetually to the earth, and are soon to be resolved into dust. How consistent is Christianity with this inward teaching ! In Christianity, with what strength, with what bold relief, is the supremacy of the spiritual nature brought out ! What contempt does Jesus cast on the body and its interests,

when compared with the redemption of the soul!—Another great truth dawns on me when I look within. I learn more and more, that the great springs of happiness and misery are in the mind, and that the efforts of men to secure peace by other processes than by inward purification, are vain strivings; and Christianity is not only consistent with, but founded on this great truth; teaching us that the kingdom of heaven is within us, and proposing, as its great end, to rescue the mind from evil, and to endue it with a strength and dignity worthy its divine origin.—Again, when I look into the soul I meet intimations of another great truth. I discern in it capacities which are not fully unfolded here. I see desires which find no adequate good on earth. I see a principle of hope always pressing forward into futurity. Here are marks of a nature not made wholly for this world; and how does Christianity agree with this teaching of our own souls? Its great doctrine is that of a higher life, where the spiritual germ within us will open for ever, and where the immortal good after which the mind aspires will prove a reality.—Had I time, I might survey distinctly the various principles of the soul, the intellectual, moral, social, and active, and might show you how Christianity accords with them all, enlarging their scope and energy, proposing to them nobler objects, and aiding their development by the impulse of a boundless hope. But, commending these topics to your private meditation, I will take but one more view of the soul. When I look within, I see stains of sin, and fears and forebodings of guilt; and how adapted to such a nature is Christianity, a religion which contains blood-

sealed promises of forgiveness to the penitent, and which proffers heavenly strength to fortify us in our conflict with moral evil.—I say, then, Christianity consists with the nature within us, as well as with nature around us. The highest truths in respect to the soul are not only responded to, but are carried out by Christianity, so that it deserves to be called the perfection of reason.

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#### THE GREAT PURPOSE OF CHRISTIANITY.

Receive Christianity as given to raise you in the scale of spiritual being. Expect from it no good, any farther than it gives strength and worth to your characters. Think not, as some seem to think, that Christ has a higher gift than purity to bestow, even pardon to the sinner. He does bring pardon. But once separate the idea of pardon from purity; once imagine that forgiveness is possible to him who does not forsake sin; once make it an exemption from outward punishment, and not the admission of the reformed mind to favour and communion with God; and the doctrine of pardon becomes your peril, and a system so teaching it, is fraught with evil. Expect no good from Christ, any farther than you are exalted by his character and teaching. Expect nothing from his cross, unless a power comes from it, strengthening you to “bear his cross,” to “drink his cup,” with his own unconquerable love. This is its highest influence. Look not abroad for the blessings of Christ. His reign and chief blessings are within you. The human soul is his kingdom. There he gains his victories, there rears his temples, there lavishes his treasures. His noblest monument is a mind redeemed from iniquity, brought

back and devoted to God, forming itself after the perfection of the Saviour, great through its power to suffer for truth, lovely through its meek and gentle virtues. No other monument does Christ desire; for this will endure and increase in splendour, when earthly thrones shall have fallen, and even when the present order of the outward universe shall have accomplished its work, and shall have passed away.

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#### THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

We conceive that Christians have generally leaned towards a very injurious view of the Supreme Being. They have too often felt, as if he were raised, by his greatness and sovereignty, above the principles of morality, above those eternal laws of equity and rectitude, to which all other beings are subjected. We believe, that in no being is the sense of right so strong, so omnipotent, as in God. We believe that his almighty power is entirely submitted to his perceptions of rectitude; and this is the ground of our piety. It is not because he is our Creator merely, but because he created us for good and holy purposes; it is not because his will is irresistible, but because his will is the perfection of virtue, that we pay him allegiance. We cannot bow before a being, however great and powerful, who governs tyrannically. We respect nothing but excellence, whether on earth or in heaven. We venerate not the loftiness of God's throne, but the equity and goodness in which it is established.

We believe that God is infinitely good, kind, benevolent, in the proper sense of these words; good in disposition, as well as in act; good, not to a few, but to all; good to every individual, as well as to the general system.

We believe, too, that God is just; but we never forget, that his justice is the justice of a good being, dwelling in the same mind, and acting in harmony, with perfect benevolence. By this attribute, we understand God's infinite regard to virtue or moral worth, expressed in a moral government; that is, in giving excellent and equitable laws, and in conferring such rewards, and inflicting such punishments as are best fitted to secure their observance. God's justice has for its end the highest virtue of the creation, and it punishes for this end alone, and thus it coincides with benevolence; for virtue and happiness, though not the same, are inseparably conjoined.

God's justice thus viewed, appears to us to be in perfect harmony with his mercy. According to the prevalent systems of theology, these attributes are so discordant and jarring, that to reconcile them is the hardest task, and the most wonderful achievement of infinite wisdom. To us they seem to be intimate friends always at peace, breathing the same spirit, and seeking the same end. By God's mercy we understand not a blind instinctive compassion, which forgives without reflection, and without regard to the interests of virtue. This we acknowledge, would be incompatible with justice, and also with enlightened benevolence, God's mercy, as we understand it, desires strongly the happiness of the guilty, but only through their penitence. It has a regard to character as truly as his justice. It defers punishment, and suffers long, that the sinner may return to his duty, but leaves the impenitent and unyielding, to the fearful retribution threatened in God's Word.



To give our views of God in one word, we believe in his Parental character. We ascribe to him, not only the name, but the dispositions and principles of a father. We believe that he has a father's concern for his creatures, a father's desire for their improvement, a father's equity in proportioning his commands to their powers, a father's joy in their progress, a father's readiness to receive the penitent, and a father's justice for the incorrigible. We look upon this world as a place of education, in which he is training men by prosperity and adversity, by aids and obstructions, by conflicts of reason and passions, by motives to duty and temptations to sin, by a various discipline suited to free and moral beings, for union with himself, and for a sublime and ever-growing virtue in heaven.

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#### GOD OUR FATHER.

God is the Father, and as such let him be worshipped. He is the Father. By this I understand that he has given being not only to worlds of matter, but to a rational, moral, spiritual, universe, and still more I understand, not only that he has created a spiritual family in heaven and on earth, but that he manifests towards them the attributes and exerts on them the influences of a Father. Some of these attributes and influences I will suggest, that the parental character in which God is to be worshipped may be more distinctly apprehended and more deeply felt.

First, then, in calling God the Father, I understand that he loves his rational and moral offspring with unbounded affection. Love is the fundamental attribute of a Father. How



deep, strong, tender, enduring, the attachment of a human parent! But this shadows forth feebly the Divine Parent. He loves us with an energy like that with which he upholds the universe. The human parent does not comprehend his child, cannot penetrate the mystery of the spiritual nature which lies hid beneath the infant form. It is the prerogative of God alone, to understand the immortal mind to which he gives life. The narrowest human spirit can be comprehended in its depths and destiny by none but its Maker, and is more precious in his sight than material worlds. Is he not peculiarly its Father?

Again, in calling God the Father, I understand that it is his chief purpose in creating and governing the universe, to educate, train, form, and ennoble the rational and moral being to whom he has given birth. Education is the great work of a parent, and he who neglects it is unworthy the name. God gives birth to the mind, that it may grow and rise for ever, and its progress is the end of all his works. This outward universe, with its sun and stars, and mighty revolutions, is but a school in which the Father is training his children. God is ever present to the human mind to carry on its education, pouring in upon it instruction and incitement from the outward world, stirring up everlasting truths within itself, rousing it to activity by pleasure and pain, calling forth its affections by surrounding fellow-creatures, calling it to duty by placing it amidst various relations, awakening its sympathy by sights of sorrow, awakening its imagination by a world of beauty, and especially exposing it to suffering, hardship, and temptation, that by resistance it may grow strong, and by seeking help

from above, it may bind itself closely to its Maker. Thus he is the Father. There are those who think, that God, if a parent, must make our enjoyment his supreme end. He has a higher end, our intellectual and moral education. Even the good human parent, desires the progress, the virtue of his child more than its enjoyment. God never manifests himself more as our Father, than in appointing to us pains, conflicts, trials, by which we may rise to the heroism of virtue, may become strong to do, to dare, to suffer, to sacrifice all things at the call of truth and duty.

Again, in calling God a Father, I understand that he exercises authority over his rational offspring. Authority is the essential attribute of a father. A parent, worthy of that name, embodies and expresses both in commands and actions, the everlasting law of Duty. His highest function is to bring out in the minds of his children the idea of Right, and to open to them the perfection of their nature. It is too common a notion, that God as Father, must be more disposed to bless than to command. His commands are among his chief blessings. He never speaks with more parental kindness than by that inward voice, which teaches duty and excites and cheers to its performance. Nothing is so strict, so inflexible in enjoining the right and the good as perfect love. This can endure no moral stain in its object. The whole experience of life, rightly construed, is a revelation of God's parental authority and righteous retribution.

Again. When I call God the Father, I understand that he communicates Himself, his own spirit, what is most glorious in his own

nature to his rational offspring; a doctrine almost overwhelming by its grandeur, but yet true, and the very truth which shines most clearly from the Christian Scriptures. It belongs to a parent to breathe into the child whatever is best and loftiest in his own soul, and for this end a good father seeks every approach to the mind of the child. Such a father is God. He has created us not only to partake of his works, but to be "partakers of a divine nature," not only to receive his gifts, but to receive Himself. As he is a pure spirit, he has an access to the minds of his children not enjoyed by human parents. He pervades, penetrates, our souls. All other beings, our nearest friends, are far from us, foreign to us, strangers, compared with God. Others hold intercourse with us through the body. He is in immediate contact with our souls. We do not discern him because he is too near, too inward, too deep to be recognized by our present imperfect consciousness. And he is thus near, not only to discern, but to act, to influence, to give his spirit, to communicate to us divinity. This is the great paternal gift of God. He has greater gifts than the world. He confers more than the property of the earth and heavens. The very attributes from which the earth and heavens sprung, these he imparts to his rational offspring. Even his disinterested, impartial, universal goodness, which diffuses beauty, life, and happiness, even this excellence it is his purpose to breathe into and cherish in the human soul.

I might here pause in the attempt to give distinct conceptions of the Father whom we are to worship; but there are two views so suited to us, as sinful and mortal beings, that I cannot pass

them over without brief notice. Let me add, then, that in speaking of God as the Father, I understand, that he looks with overflowing compassion on such of his rational offspring as forsake him, as forsake the law of duty. It is the property of the human parent to follow with yearnings of tenderness an erring child; and in this he is a faint type of God, who sees his lost sons "a great way off," who to recover his human family, spared not his beloved Son, who sends his regenerating spirit into the fallen soul, sends rebuke and shame, and fear, and sorrow, and awakens the dead in trespasses and sins, to a higher life than that which the first birth conferred.

I also understand, in calling God the Father, that he destines his rational, moral creatures to Immortality. How ardently does the human parent desire to prolong the life of his child! And how much more must He, who gave being to the spirit with its unbounded faculties, desire its endless being! God is our Father, for he has made us to bear the image of his own eternity as well as of his other attributes. Other things pass away, for they fulfil their end; but the soul, which never reaches its goal, whose development is never complete, is never to disappear from the universe. God created it to receive for ever of his fulness. His fatherly love is not exhausted in what he now bestows. There is a higher life. Human perfection is not a dream. The brightest visions of genius fade before the realities of excellence and happiness to which good men are ordained. In that higher life, the parental character of God will break forth from the clouds which now obscure it. His bright image in his children will proclaim the Infinite Father.

## CHRIST THE SON OF GOD.

In saying that the Divine Sonship of Jesus is the great foundation of attachment to him, I say nothing inconsistent with the doctrine, that the moral excellence of Jesus is the great object and ground of the love which is due to him. Indeed, I only repeat the principle, that he is to be loved exclusively for the virtues of his character; for what, I ask, is the great idea involved in his filial relation to God? To be the Son of God, in the chief and highest sense of that term, is to bear the likeness, to possess the spirit, to be partaker of the moral perfections of God. This is the essential idea. To be God's Son is to be united with him by consent and accordance of mind. Jesus was the only begotten Son, because he was the perfect image and representative of God, especially of divine philanthropy; because he espoused as his own the benevolent purposes of God towards the human race, and yielded himself to their accomplishment with an entire self-sacrifice. To know Jesus as the Son of God, is not to understand what theologians have written about his eternal generation, or about a mystical, incomprehensible union between Christ and his Father. It is something far higher and more instructive. It is to see in Christ, if I may say so, the lineaments of the universal Father. It is to discern in him a godlike purity and goodness. It is to understand his harmony with the Divine Mind, and the entireness and singleness of love with which he devoted himself to the purposes of God, and the interests of the human race. Of consequence, to love Jesus as the Son of God, is to love the spotless purity and godlike charity of his soul.



## JESUS THE SAVIOUR.

Whilst we gratefully acknowledge, that he came to rescue us from punishment, we believe, that he was sent on a still nobler errand, namely, to deliver us from sin itself, and to form us to a sublime and heavenly virtue. We regard him as a Saviour, chiefly as he is the light, physician, and guide of the dark, diseased, and wandering mind. No influence in the universe seems to us so glorious, as that over the character; and no redemption so worthy of thankfulness, as the restoration of the soul to purity. Without this, pardon, were it possible, would be of little value. Why pluck the sinner from hell, if a hell be left to burn in his own breast? Why raise him to heaven, if he remain a stranger to its sanctity and love? With these impressions, we are accustomed to value the Gospel chiefly as it abounds in effectual aids, motives, excitements to a generous and divine virtue. In this virtue, as in a common centre, we see all its doctrines, precepts, promises meet; and we believe, that faith in this religion is of no worth, and contributes nothing to salvation, any farther than as it uses these doctrines, precepts, promises, and the whole life, character, sufferings, and triumphs of Jesus, as the means of purifying the mind, of changing it into the likeness of his celestial excellence.

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CHRIST THE MEDIATOR.

I now proceed to give our views of the mediation of Christ, and of the purposes of his mission. With regard to the great object which Jesus came to accomplish, there seems to be no possibility of mistake. We believe, that he was sent



by the Father to effect a moral, or spiritual deliverance of mankind; that is, to rescue men from sin and its consequences, and to bring them to a state of everlasting purity and happiness. We believe, too, that he accomplishes this sublime purpose by a variety of methods; by his instructions respecting God's unity, parental character, and moral government, which are admirably fitted to reclaim the world from idolatry and impiety, to the knowledge, love, and obedience of the Creator; by his promises of pardon to the penitent, and of divine assistance to those who labour for progress in moral excellence; by the light which he has thrown on the path of duty; by his own spotless example, in which the loveliness and sublimity of virtue shine forth to warm and quicken, as well as guide us to perfection; by his threatenings against incorrigible guilt; by his glorious discoveries of immortality; by his sufferings and death; by that signal event, the resurrection, which powerfully bore witness to his divine mission, and brought down to men's senses a future life; by his continual intercession, which obtains for us spiritual aid and blessings; and by the power with which he is invested of raising the dead, judging the world, and conferring the everlasting rewards promised to the faithful.

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#### JESUS OUR EXEMPLAR.

I exhort you with calmness, but earnestness, to choose and adopt Jesus Christ as your example, with the whole energy of your wills. I exhort you to resolve on following him, not, as perhaps you have done, with a faint and yielding purpose, but with the full conviction, that your whole

happiness is concentrated in the force and constancy of your adherence to this celestial guide. My friends, there is no other happiness. Let not the false views of Christianity which prevail in the world, seduce you into the belief, that Christ can bless you in any other way than by assimilating you to his own virtue, than by breathing into you his mind. Do not imagine that any faith or love towards Jesus can avail you, but that which quickens you to conform yourselves to his spotless purity and unconquerable rectitude. Settle it as an immoveable truth, that neither in this world nor in the next can you be happy, but in proportion to the sanctity and elevation of your characters. Let no man imagine, that through the patronage or protection of Jesus Christ, or any other being, he can find peace or any sincere good, but in the growth of an enlightened, firm, disinterested, holy mind. Expect no good from Jesus, any further than you clothe yourselves with his excellence. He can impart to you nothing so precious as himself, as his own mind; and believe me, my hearers, this mind may dwell in you. His sublimest virtues may be yours. Admit, welcome this great truth. Look up to the illustrious Son of God, with the conviction that you may become one with him in thought, in feeling, in power, in holiness. His character will become a blessing, just as far as it shall awaken in you this consciousness, this hope. The most lamentable scepticism on earth, and incomparably the most common, is a scepticism as to the greatness, powers, and high destinies of human nature. In this greatness I desire to cherish an unwavering faith. Tell me not of the universal corruption of the race. Humanity has

already in not a few instances, borne conspicuously the likeness of Christ and God. The sun grows dim, the grandeur of outward nature shrinks, when compared with the spiritual energy of men, who, in the cause of truth, of God, of charity, have spurned all bribes of ease, pleasure, renown, and have withstood shame, want, persecution, torture, and the most dreaded forms of death. In such men I learn that the soul was made in God's image, and made to conform itself to the loveliness and greatness of his Son.

My friends, we may all approach Jesus Christ. For all of us he died, to leave us an example that we should follow his steps. By earnest purpose, by self-conflict, by watching and prayer, by faith in the Christian promises, by those heavenly aids and illuminations, which he that seeketh shall find, we may all unite ourselves, in living bonds to Christ, may love as he loved, may act from his principles, may suffer with his constancy, may enter into his purposes, may sympathise with his self-devotion to the cause of God and mankind, and by likeness of spirit, may prepare ourselves to meet him as our everlasting friend.

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#### THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The promise of the Holy Spirit is among the most precious in the sacred volume. Worlds could not tempt me to part with the doctrine of God's intimate connexion with the mind, and of his free and full communications to it. But these views are in no respect at variance with what I have taught of the method by which we are to grow in the likeness of God. Scripture and experience concur in teaching, that by the

Holy Spirit, we are to understand a divine assistance adapted to our moral freedom, and accordant with the fundamental truth, that virtue is the mind's own work. By the Holy Spirit, I understand an aid, which must be gained and made effectual by our own activity; an aid, which no more interferes with our faculties, than the assistance which we receive from our fellow-beings; an aid, which silently mingles and conspires with all other helps and means of goodness; an aid, by which we unfold our natural powers in a natural order, and by which we are strengthened to understand and apply the resources derived from our munificent Creator. This aid we cannot prize too much, or pray for too earnestly. But wherein, let me ask, does it war with the doctrine, that God is to be approached by the exercise and unfolding of our highest powers and affections, in the ordinary circumstances of human life?

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#### CHRIST'S COMING.

Christ, in the New Testament, is said to *come*, whenever his religion breaks out in new glory, or gains new triumphs. He came in the Holy Spirit, in the day of Pentecost. He came in the destruction of Jerusalem, which, by subverting the old ritual law, and breaking the power of the worst enemies of his religion, ensured to it new victories. He came in the Reformation of the Church. He came on this day four years ago, when, through his religion, Eight Hundred Thousand men were raised from the lowest degradation, to the rights, and dignity, and fellowship of men. Christ's outward appearance is of little moment, compared with the brighter

manifestations of his spirit. The Christian whose inward eyes and ears are touched by God, discerns the coming of Christ, hears the sound of his chariot-wheels and the voice of his trumpet, when no other perceives them. He discerns the Saviour's advent in the dawning of higher truth on the world, in new aspirations of the church after perfection, in the prostration of prejudice and error, in brighter expressions of Christian love, in more enlightened and intense consecration of the Christian to the cause of humanity, freedom, and religion. Christ comes in the conversion, the regeneration, the emancipation of the world.

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#### IMMORTALITY.

How full, how bright are the evidences of this grand truth! How weak are the common arguments, which scepticism arrays against it! To me, there is but one objection against immortality, if objection it may be called, and this arises from the very greatness of the truth. My mind sometimes sinks under its weight, is lost in its immensity; I scarcely dare believe that such a good is placed within my reach. When I think of myself, as existing through all future ages, as surviving this earth and that sky, as exempted from every imperfection and error of my present being, as clothed with an angel's glory, as comprehending with my intellect and embracing in my affections an extent of creation compared with which the earth is a point; when I think of myself, as looking on the outward universe with an organ of vision that will reveal to me a beauty and harmony and order not now imagined, and as having an access to the minds of the wise



and good, which will make them in a sense my own; when I think of myself, as forming friendships with innumerable beings of rich and various intellect and of the noblest virtue, as introduced to the society of heaven, as meeting there the great and excellent, of whom I have read in history, as joined with "the just made perfect" in an ever-enlarging ministry of benevolence, of conversing with Jesus Christ with the familiarity of friendship, and especially as having an immediate intercourse with God, such as the closest intimacies of earth dimly shadow forth;—when this thought of my future being comes to me, whilst I hope, I also fear; the blessedness seems too great; the consciousness of present weakness and unworthiness is almost too strong for hope. But when, in this frame of mind, I look round on the creation, and see there the marks of an omnipotent goodness, to which nothing is impossible, and from which everything may be hoped; when I see around me the proofs of an infinite Father, who must desire the perpetual progress of his intellectual offspring; when I look next at the human mind, and see what powers a few years have unfolded, and discern in it the capacity of everlasting improvement; and especially when I look at Jesus, the conqueror of death, the heir of immortality, who has gone as the forerunner of mankind into the mansions of light and purity, I can and do admit the almost overpowering thought of the everlasting life, growth, felicity of the human soul.

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#### SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE.

In regard to the spiritual influence, by which



God brings the created spirit into conformity to his own, I would that I could speak worthily. It is gentle, that it may not interfere with our freedom. It sustains, mingles with, and moves all our faculties. It acts through nature, providence, revelation, society, and experience; and the Scriptures, confirmed by reason and the testimonies of the wisest and best men, teach us, that it acts still more directly. God, being immediately present to the soul, holds immediate communion with it, in proportion as it prepares itself to receive and to use aright the heavenly inspiration. He opens the inward eye to himself, communicates secret monitions of duty, revives and freshens our convictions of truth, builds up our faith in human immortality, unseals the deep, unfathomed fountains of Love within us, instils strength, peace, and comfort, and gives victory over pain, sin, and death.

This influence of God, exerted on the soul to conform it to himself, to make it worthy of its divine parentage, this it is which most clearly manifests what is meant by his being our Father. We understand his parental relation to us, only as far as we comprehend this great purpose and exercise of his love. We must have faith in the human soul as receptive of the divinity, as made for greatness, for spiritual elevation, for likeness to God, or God's character as a Father will be to us an unrevealed mystery. If we think, as so many seem to think, that God has made us only for low pleasures and attainments, that our nature is incapable of godlike virtues, that our prayers for the Divine Spirit are unheard, that celestial influences do not descend into the human soul, that God never breathes on it to lift it above

its present weakness, to guide it to a more perfect existence, to unite it more intimately with himself, then we know but faintly the meaning of a Father in Heaven. The great revelation in Christianity of a Paternal Divinity, is still to be made to us.

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#### THE RIGHT USE OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS.

I have often been struck by the contrast between the use made of the cross in the pulpit, and the calm, unimpassioned manner in which the sufferings of Jesus are detailed by the Evangelists. These witnesses of Christ's last moments, give you in simple language the particulars of that scene, without one remark, one word of emotion; and if you read the Acts and Epistles, you will not find a single instance in which the Apostles strove to make a moving picture of his crucifixion. No; they honoured Jesus too much, they felt too deeply the greatness of his character, to be moved as many are by the circumstances of his death. Reverence, admiration, sympathy with his sublime spirit, these swallowed up in a great measure, sympathy with his sufferings. The cross was to them the last, crowning manifestation of a celestial mind; they felt that it was endured to communicate the same mind to them and the world; and their emotion was a holy joy in this consummate and unconquerable goodness. To be touched by suffering is a light thing. It is not the greatness of Christ's sufferings on the cross which is to move our whole souls, but the greatness of the spirit with which he suffered. There, in death, he proved his entire consecration of himself to the cause of God and mankind. There, his love flowed forth towards his friends, his enemies,

and the human race. It is moral greatness, it is victorious love, it is the energy of principle, which gives such interest to the cross of Christ. We are to look through the darkness which hung over him, through his wounds and pains, to his unbroken, disinterested, confiding spirit. To approach the cross for the purpose of weeping over a bleeding, dying friend, is to lose the chief influence of the crucifixion. We are to visit the cross, not to indulge a natural softness, but to acquire firmness of spirit, to fortify our minds for hardship and suffering in the cause of duty and of human happiness. To live as Christ lived, to die as Christ died, to give up ourselves as sacrifices to God, to conscience, to whatever good interest we can advance,—these are the lessons written with the blood of Jesus. His cross is to inspire us with a calm courage, resolution, and superiority to all temptation.

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#### THE PURPOSE OF SUFFERING.

This is found in the truth, that benevolence has a higher aim than to bestow enjoyment. There is a higher good than enjoyment; and this requires suffering in order to be gained. As long as we narrow our view of benevolence, and see in it only a disposition to bestow pleasure, so long life will be a mystery; for pleasure is plainly not its great end. Earth is not a paradise, where streams of joy gush out unbidden at our feet, and uncloying fruits tempt us on every side to stretch out our hands and eat. But this does not detract from God's love; because he has something better for us than gushing streams or profuse indulgence. When we look into ourselves, we find something besides capacities and

desires of pleasure. Amidst the selfish and animal principles of our nature, there is an awful power, a sense of Right, a voice which speaks of Duty, an idea grander than the largest personal interest—The Idea of Excellence, of Perfection. Here is the seal of Divinity on us ; here the sign of our descent from God. It is in this gift that we see the benevolence of God. It is in writing this inward law on the heart, it is in giving us the conception of Moral Goodness, and the power to strive after it, the power of self-conflict and self-denial, of surrendering pleasure to duty, and of suffering for the right, the true, and the good ;—it is in thus enduing us, and not in giving us capacities of pleasure, that God's goodness shines ; and of consequence, whatever gives a field, and excitement, and exercise, and strength, and dignity to these principles of our nature, is the highest manifestation of benevolence.

Moral, spiritual excellence, that which we confide in and revere, is not, and from its nature cannot be, an instinctive, irresistible feeling infused into us from abroad, and which may grow up amidst a life of indulgence and ease. It is in its very essence, a free activity, an energy of the will, a deliberate preference of the right and the holy to all things, and a chosen, cheerful surrender of everything to these. It grows brighter, stronger, in proportion to the pains it bears, the difficulties it surmounts. Can we wonder that we suffer ? Is not suffering the true school of a moral being ? As administered by Providence, may it not be the most necessary portion of our lot ?

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## JESUS CHRIST IN HEAVEN.

Jesus is indeed sometimes spoken of as reigning in the future world, and sometimes imagination places him on a real and elevated throne. Strange that such conceptions can enter the minds of Christians. Jesus will indeed reign in Heaven, and so he reigned on earth. He reigned in the fishing-boat, from which he taught; in the humble dwelling, where he gathered round him, listening and confiding disciples. His reign is not the vulgar dominion of this world. It is the empire of a great, godlike, disinterested being, over minds capable of comprehending and loving him. In Heaven, nothing like what we call government on earth can exist, for government here is founded in human weakness and guilt. The voice of command is never heard among the spirits of the just. Even on earth, the most perfect government is that of a family, where parents employ no tone but that of affectionate counsel, where filial affection reads its duty in the mild look, and finds its law and motive in its own pure impulse. Christ will not be raised on a throne above his followers. On earth he sat at the same table with the publican and sinner. Will he recede from the excellent whom he has fitted for celestial mansions?

## HUMAN LIKENESS TO GOD.

God is a spirit, says the text, and we are spirits also. This our consciousness teaches. We are conscious of a principle superior to the body, which comprehends and controls it. We are conscious of faculties higher than the senses. We do something more than receive impressions passively, unresistingly, like the brute, from the



outward world. We analyse, compare, and combine anew the things which we see, subject the outward world to the inquisition of reason, create sciences, rise to general laws, and through these establish an empire over earth and sea. We penetrate beneath the surface which the senses report; search for the hidden causes, inquire for the ends or purposes, trace out the connections, dependencies, and harmonies of nature; discover a sublime unity amidst its boundless variety, and order amidst its seeming confusion; rise to the idea of one all-comprehending and all-ordaining Mind; and thus by thought, make as it were a new universe radiant with wisdom, beneficence, and beauty. We are not mere creatures of matter and sense. We conceive a higher good than comes from the senses. We possess, as a portion of our being, a law higher than appetite, nobler and more enduring than all the laws of matter, the Law of Duty. We discern, we approve, the Right, the Good, the Just, the Holy, and by this sense of rectitude are laid under obligations, which no power of the outward universe can dissolve. We have within us a higher force than all the forces of material nature, a power of will which can adhere to duty and to God in opposition to all the might of the elements, and all the malignity of earth or hell. We have thoughts, ideas, which do not come from matter, the Ideas of the Infinite, the Everlasting, the Immutable, the Perfect. Living amidst the frail, the limited, the changing, we rise to the thought of Unbounded, Eternal, Almighty Goodness. Nor is this all. While matter obeys mechanical and irresistible laws, and is bound by an unrelaxing necessity to



the same fixed, unvarying movements, we feel ourselves to be Free. We have power over ourselves, over thought and desire, power to conform ourselves to a law written on our hearts, and power to resist this law. Man must never be confounded with the material, mechanical world around him. He is a spirit. He has capacities, thoughts, impulses, which assimilate him to God. His reason is a ray of the Infinite Reason; his conscience, an oracle of the Divinity, publishing the Everlasting Law of Rectitude. Therefore God is his Father. Therefore he is bound to his Maker by a spiritual bond. This we must feel, or we know nothing of the parental relation of God to the human race.

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#### THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION.

Inward sanctity, pure love, disinterested attachment to God and man, obedience of heart and life, sincere excellence of character, this is the one thing needful, this the essential thing in religion; and all things else, ministers, churches, ordinances, places of worship, all are but means, helps, secondary influences, and utterly worthless when separated from this. To imagine that God regards anything but this, that he looks at anything but the heart, is to dishonour him, to express a mournful insensibility to his pure character. Goodness, purity, virtue, this is the only distinction in God's sight. This is intrinsically, essentially, everlastingly, and by its own nature, lovely, beautiful, glorious, divine. It owes nothing to time, to circumstance, to outward connexions. It shines by its own light. It is the sun of the spiritual universe. It is God himself dwelling in the human soul. Can any man

think lightly of it, because it has not grown up in a certain church, or exalt any church above it? My friends, one of the grandest truths of religion, is the supreme importance of character, of virtue, of that divine spirit which shone out in Christ. The grand heresy is, to substitute anything for this, whether creed, or form, or church. One of the greatest wrongs to Christ, is to despise his character, his virtue, in a disciple who happens to wear a different name from our own.

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HEAVEN.

Heaven is, in truth, a glorious reality. Its attraction should be felt perpetually. It should overcome the force with which this world draws us to itself. Were there a country on earth uniting all that is beautiful in nature, all that is great in virtue, genius, and the liberal arts, and numbering among its citizens, the most illustrious patriots, poets, philosophers, philanthropists, of our age, how eagerly should we cross the ocean to visit it! And how immeasurably greater is the attraction of Heaven! There live the elder brethren of the creation, the sons of the morning, who sang for joy at the creation of our race; there the great and good of all ages and climes; the friends, benefactors, deliverers, ornaments of their race; the patriarch, prophet, apostle, and martyr; the true heroes of public, and still more of private life: the father, mother, wife, husband, child, who unrecorded by man, have walked before God in the beauty of love and self-sacrificing virtue. There are all who have built up in our hearts the power of goodness and truth, the writers from whose pages we have received the

inspiration of pure and lofty sentiments, the friends, whose countenances have shed light through our dwellings, and peace and strength through our hearts. There they are gathered together, safe from every storm, triumphant over evil;—and they say to us, Come and join us in our everlasting blessedness; Come and bear part in our song of praise; Share our adoration, friendship, progress, and works of love. They say to us, Cherish now in your earthly life, that spirit and virtue of Christ which is the beginning and dawn of Heaven, and we shall soon welcome you, with more than human friendship, to our own immortality. Shall that voice speak to us in vain? Shall our worldliness and unforsaken sins, separate us, by a gulf which cannot be passed from the society of Heaven?

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#### RELIGIOUS PEACE.

There is a twofold peace. The first is negative. It is relief from disquiet and corroding care. It is repose after conflict and storms. But there is another and a higher peace, to which this is but the prelude, “a peace of God which passeth all understanding,” and properly called “the kingdom of heaven within us.” This state is anything but negative. It is the highest and most strenuous action of the soul, but an entirely harmonious action, in which all our powers and affections are blended in a beautiful proportion, and sustain and perfect one another. It is more than silence after storms. It is as the concord of all melodious sounds. Has the reader never known a season, when, in the fullest flow of thought and feeling, in the universal action of the soul, an inward calm, profound as midnight

silence, yet bright as the still summer noon, full of joy, but unbroken by one throb of tumultuous passion, has been breathed through his spirit, and given him a glimpse and presage of the serenity of a happier world? Of this character is the peace of religion. It is a conscious harmony with God and the creation, an alliance of love with all beings, a sympathy with all that is pure and happy, a surrender of every separate will and interest, a participation of the spirit and life of the universe, an entire concord of purpose with its Infinite Original. This is peace, and the true happiness of man; and we think that human nature has never entirely lost sight of this its great end. It has always sighed for a repose, in which energy of thought and will might be tempered with an all-pervading tranquillity. We seem to discover aspirations after this good, a dim consciousness of it, in all ages of the world. We think we see it in those systems of Oriental and Grecian philosophy, which proposed, as the consummation of present virtue, a release from all disquiet, and an intimate union and harmony with the Divine Mind. We even think, that we trace this consciousness, this aspiration, in the works of ancient art which time has spared to us, in which the sculptor, aiming to embody his deepest thoughts of human perfections, has joined with the fulness of life and strength, a repose, which breathes into the spectator an admiration as calm as it is exalted. Man, we believe, never wholly loses the sentiment of his true good. There are yearnings, sighings, which he does not himself comprehend, which break forth alike in his prosperous and adverse seasons, which betray a deep, indestructible faith in a good that

he has not found, and which, in proportion as they grow distinct, rise to God, and concentrate the soul in him, as at once its life and rest, the fountain at once of energy and of peace.

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#### STRENGTH FROM TRIAL.

Do not complain, then, of life's trials. Through these you may gain incomparably higher good, than indulgence and ease. This view reveals to us the impartial goodness of God in the variety of human conditions. We sometimes see individuals, whose peculiar trials are thought to make their existence to them an evil. But among such may be found the most favoured children of God. If there be a man on earth to be envied, it is he, who amidst the sharpest assaults from his own passions, from fortune, from society, never falters in his allegiance to God and the inward monitor. So peculiar is the excellence of this moral strength, that I believe the Creator regards one being who puts it forth, with greater complacency than he would look on a world of beings, innocent and harmless, through the necessity of constitution. I know not that human wisdom has arrived at a juster or higher view of the present state, than that it is intended to call forth power by obstruction, the power of intellect by the difficulties of knowledge, the power of conscience and virtue by temptation, allurements, pleasure, pain, and the alternations of prosperous and adverse life. When I see a man holding faster his uprightness in proportion as it is assailed, fortifying his religious trust in proportion as Providence is obscure; hoping in the ultimate triumph of virtue, more surely in proportion to its present afflictions; cherishing



philanthropy amidst the discouraging experience of men's unkindness and unthankfulness; extending to others a sympathy which his own sufferings need, but cannot obtain; growing milder and gentler amidst what tends to exasperate and harden; and through inward principle converting the very incitements to evil into the occasions of a victorious virtue,—I see an explanation, and a noble explanation, of the present state. I see a good produced, so transcendent in its nature as to justify all the evil and suffering under which it grows up. I should think the formation of a few such minds worth all the apparatus of the present world. I should say, that this earth with its continents and oceans, its seasons and harvests, and its successive generations, was a work worthy of God, even were it to accomplish no other end than the training and manifestation of the illustrious characters which are scattered through history. And when I consider, how small a portion of human virtue is recorded by history, how superior in dignity, as well as in number are the unnoticed, unhonoured saints and heroes of domestic and humble life, I see a light thrown over the present state which more than reconciles me to all its evils.

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#### REAL GREATNESS.

Real greatness has nothing to do with a man's sphere. It does not lie in the magnitude of his outward agency, in the extent of the effects which he produces. The greatest men may do comparatively little abroad. Perhaps the greatest in our city at this moment are buried in obscurity. Grandeur of character lies wholly in force of soul, that is, in the force of thought, moral prin-



principle, and love, and this may be found in the humblest condition of life. A man brought up to an obscure trade, and hemmed in by the wants of a growing family, may, in his narrow sphere, perceive more clearly, discriminate more keenly, weigh evidence more wisely, seize on the right means more decisively, and have more presence of mind in difficulty, than another who has accumulated vast stores of knowledge by laborious study; and he has more of intellectual greatness. Many a man, who has gone but a few miles from home, understands human nature better, detects motives and weighs character more sagaciously, than another, who has travelled over the known world, and made a name by his reports of different countries. It is force of thought which measures intellectual, and so it is force of principle which measures moral greatness, that highest of human endowments, that brightest manifestation of the Divinity. The greatest man is he who chooses the Right with invincible resolution, who resists the sorest temptations from within and without, who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully, who is calmest in storms, and most fearless under menace and frowns, whose reliance on truth, on virtue, on God, is most unfaltering; and is this a greatness which is apt to make a show, or which is most likely to abound in conspicuous station? The solemn conflicts of reason with passion; the victories of moral and religious principle over urgent and almost irresistible solicitations to self-indulgence; the hardest sacrifices of duty, those of deep-seated affection and of the heart's fondest hopes; the consolations, hopes, joys, and peace, of disappointed, persecuted, scorned, deserted virtue; these are of course

unseen ; so that the true greatness of human life is almost wholly out of sight. Perhaps in our presence, the most heroic deed on earth is done in some silent spirit, the loftiest purpose cherished, the most generous sacrifice made, and we do not suspect it. I believe this greatness to be most common among the multitude, whose names are never heard. Among common people will be found more of hardship borne manfully, more of unvarnished truth, more of religious trust, more of that generosity which gives what the giver needs himself, and more of a wise estimate of life and death, than among the more prosperous.

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#### THE SOUL'S WELCOME INTO HEAVEN.

Those who are newly born into Heaven meet Jesus, and meet from him the kindest welcome. The happiness of the Saviour, in receiving to a higher life a human being who has been redeemed, purified, inspired with immortal goodness by his influence, we can but imperfectly comprehend. You can conceive what would be your feelings, on welcoming to shore your best friend, who had been tossed on the perilous sea ; but the raptures of earthly reunion are faint compared with the happiness of Jesus, in receiving the spirit for which he died, and which under his guidance has passed with an improving virtue through a world of sore temptation. We on earth meet after our long separations to suffer as well as enjoy, and soon to part again. Jesus meets those who ascend from earth to Heaven, with the consciousness that their trial is past, their race is run, that death is conquered. With his far-reaching, prophetic eye he sees them

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shows his delight in God's benevolence, by loving and serving his neighbour; his delight in God's justice, by being resolutely upright; his sense of God's purity, by regulating his thoughts, imagination, and desires; and whose conversation, business, and domestic life, are swayed by a regard to God's presence and authority. In all things else men may deceive themselves. Disordered nerves may give them strange sights, and sounds, and impressions. Texts of Scripture may come to them as from Heaven. Their whole souls may be moved, and their confidence in God's favour be undoubting. But in all this there is no religion. The question is, do they love God's commands, in which his character is fully expressed, and give up to these their habits and passions? Without this, ecstasy is a mockery. One surrender of desire to God's will, is worth a thousand transports. We do not judge of the bent of men's minds by their raptures, any more than we judge of the natural direction of a tree during a storm.

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#### AN INVITATION TO WORSHIP.

I can only say that you, Unitarian Christians are peculiarly bound to inward worship; for to you especially, Christianity is an inward system. Most other denominations expect salvation more or less from what Jesus does abroad, especially from his agency on the mind of God. You expect it from what he does within your own minds. His great glory, according to your views, lies in his influence on the human soul, in the communication of his spirit to his followers. To you, salvation, heaven, and hell, have their seat in the soul. To you, Christianity is



wholly a spiritual system. Come, then, to this place to worship with the soul, to elevate the spirit to God. Let not this house be desecrated by a religion of show. Let it not degenerate into a place of forms. Let not your pews be occupied by lifeless machines. Do not come here to take part in lethargic repetitions of sacred words. Do not come from a cold sense of duty, to quiet conscience with the thought of having paid a debt to God. Do not come to perform a present task to ensure a future heaven. Come to find heaven now, to anticipate the happiness of that better world by breathing its spirit, to bind your souls indissolubly to your Maker. Come to worship in spirit and in truth, that is, intelligently, rationally, with clear judgment, with just and honourable conceptions of the Infinite Father, not prostrating your understandings, not renouncing the divine gift of reason, but offering an enlightened homage, such as is due to the Fountain of intelligence and truth.— Come to worship with the heart as well as intellect, with life, fervour, zeal. Sleep over your business if you will, but not over your religion.— Come to worship with strong conviction, with living faith in a higher presence than meets the eye, with a feeling of God's presence not only around you, but in the depths of your souls.— Come to worship with a filial spirit, not with fear, dread, and gloom; not with sepulchral tones and desponding looks, but with humble, cheerful, boundless trust, with overflowing gratitude, with a love willing and earnest to do, and to suffer, whatever may approve your devotion to God. Come to worship him with what he most delights in, with aspiration for spiritual light and



life; come to cherish and express desires for virtue, for purity, for power over temptation, stronger and more insatiable than spring up in your most eager pursuits of business or pleasure; and welcome joyfully every holy impulse, every accession of strength to virtuous purpose, to the love of God and man.—In a word, come to offer a refined, generous worship, to offer a tribute worthy of Him who is the perfection of truth, goodness, beauty, and blessedness. Adore him with the calmest reason and the profoundest love, and strive to conform yourselves to what you adore.

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#### THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

Who knows Christ best? I answer, It is he who, in reading his history, sees and feels most distinctly and deeply the perfection by which he was distinguished. Who knows Jesus best? It is he, who, not resting in general and almost unmeaning praises, becomes acquainted with what was peculiar, characteristic, and individual in his mind, and who has thus framed to himself, not a dim image called Jesus, but a living being, with distinct and glorious features, and with all the reality of a well-known friend. Who best knows Jesus? I answer, It is he, who deliberately feels and knows, that his character is of a higher order than all other characters which have appeared on earth, and who thirsts to commune with and resemble it. I hope I am plain. When I hear, as I do, men disputing about Jesus, and imagining that they know him by settling some theory as to his generation in time or eternity, or as to his rank in the scale of being, I feel that their knowledge of him is about as great as I should have of some saint or hero, by

studying his genealogy. These controversies have built up a technical theology, but give no insight into the mind and heart of Jesus; and without this the true knowledge of him cannot be enjoyed. And here I would observe, not in the spirit of reproach, but from a desire to do good, that I know not a more effectual method of hiding Jesus from us, of keeping us strangers to him, than the inculcation of the doctrine which makes him the same being with his Father, makes him God himself. This doctrine throws over him a mistiness. For myself, when I attempt to bring it home, I have not a real being before me, not a soul which I can understand and sympathise with, but a vague, shifting image, which gives nothing of the stability of knowledge. A being, consisting of two natures, two souls, one Divine and another human, one finite and another infinite, is made up of qualities which destroy one another, and leave nothing for distinct apprehension. This compound of different minds, and of contradictory attributes, I cannot, if I would, regard as one conscious person, one intelligent agent. It strikes me almost irresistibly as a fiction. On the other hand, Jesus, contemplated as he is set before us in the gospel, as one mind, one heart, answering to my own in all its essential powers and affections, but purified, enlarged, exalted, so as to constitute him the unsullied image of God and a perfect model, is a being who bears the marks of reality, whom I can understand, whom I can receive into my heart as the best of friends, with whom I can become intimate, and whose society I can and do anticipate among the chief blessings of my future being.

My friends, I have now stated, in general, what knowledge of Christ is most important, and is alone required in order to a true attachment to him. Let me still farther illustrate my views, by descending to one or two particulars. Among the various excellences of Jesus, he was distinguished by a benevolence so deep, so invincible, that injury and outrage had no power over it. His kindness towards men was in no degree diminished by their wrong-doing. The only intercession which he offered in his sufferings, was for those who at that very moment were wreaking on him their vengeance; and, what is more remarkable, he not only prayed for them, but with an unexampled generosity and candour, urged in their behalf the only extenuation which their conduct would admit. Now, to know Jesus Christ, is to understand this attribute of his mind, to understand the strength and triumph of the benevolent principle in this severest trial, to understand the energy with which he then held fast the virtue which he had enjoined. It is to see in the mind of Jesus at that moment a moral grandeur which raised him above all around him. This is to know him. I will suppose now a man to have studied all the controversies about Christ's nature, and to have arrived at the truest notions of his rank in the universe. But this incident in Christ's history, this discovery of his character, has never impressed him; the glory of a philanthropy which embraces one's enemies, has never dawned upon him. With all his right opinions about the Unity, or the Trinity, he lives, and acts towards others, very much as if Jesus had never lived or died. Now I say, that such a man does

not know Christ. I say, that he is a stranger to him. I say, that the great truth is hidden from him; that his skill in religious controversy is of little more use to him than would be the learning by rote of a language which he does not understand. He knows the name of Christ, but the excellence which that name imports, and which gives it its chief worth, is to him as an unknown tongue.

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#### LOVE TO CHRIST.

A true affection to him, indeed, is far from being of easy acquisition. As it is the purest and noblest we can cherish, with the single exception of love to God, so it requires the exercise of our best powers. You all must feel, that an indispensable requisite or preparation for this love is to understand the character of Jesus. But this is no easy thing. It not only demands that we carefully read and study his history; there is another process more important. We must begin in earnest to convert into practice our present imperfect knowledge of Christ, and to form ourselves upon him as far as he is now discerned. Nothing so much brightens and strengthens the eye or the mind to understand an excellent being, as likeness to him. We never know a great character until something congenial to it has grown up within ourselves. No strength of intellect and no study, can enable a man of a selfish and sensual mind to comprehend Jesus. Such a mind is covered with a mist; and just in proportion as it subdues evil within itself, the mist will be scattered, Jesus will rise upon it with a sunlike brightness, and will call forth its most fervent and most enlightened affection.

To me it seems, that to paint the misery of human beings in colours of fire and blood, and to ascribe to Christ the compassion which such misery must awaken, and to make this the chief attribute of his mind, is the very method to take from his character its greatness, and to weaken his claim on our love. I see nothing in Jesus of the overpowering compassion which is often ascribed to him. His character rarely exhibited strong emotion. It was distinguished by calmness, firmness, and conscious dignity. Jesus had a mind too elevated to be absorbed and borne away by pity, or any other passion. He felt indeed deeply, for human suffering and grief; but his chief sympathy was with the Mind, with its sins and moral diseases, and especially with its capacity of improvement, and everlasting greatness and glory. He felt himself commissioned to quicken and exalt immortal beings. The thought which kindled and sustained him, was that of an immeasurable virtue to be conferred on the mind, even of the most depraved; a good, the very conception of which implies a lofty character, a good, which as yet has only dawned on his most improved disciples. It is his consecration to this sublime end, which constitutes his glory; and no farther than we understand this, can we yield him the love which his character claims and deserves.

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#### SELF-DENIAL.

I do not say, that God can find no school for character but temptation, and trial, and strong desire; but I do say, that the present state is a fit and noble school. You, my hearers, would have the path of virtue, from the very beginning,

smooth and strewed with flowers; and would this train the soul to energy? You would have pleasure always coincide with duty; and how, then, would you attest your loyalty to duty? You would have conscience and desire always speak the same language, and prescribe the same path; and how, then, would conscience assert its supremacy? God has implanted blind desires, which often rise up against reason and conscience that he may give to these high faculties the dignity of dominion and the joy of victory. He has surrounded us with rivals to himself, that we may love him freely, and by our own unfettered choice erect his throne in our souls. He has given us strong desires of inferior things, that the desire of excellence may grow stronger than all. Make such a world as you wish, let no appetite or passion ever resist God's will, no object of desire ever come in competition with duty; and where would be the resolution, and energy, and constancy, and effort, and purity, the trampling under foot of low interests, the generous self-surrender, the heroic devotion, all the sublimities of virtue, which now throw lustre over man's nature and speak of his immortality? You would blot the precept of self-denial from the Scriptures, and the need of it from human life, and, in so doing, you would blot out almost every interesting passage in man's history. Let me ask you, when you read that history, what is it which most interests and absorbs you, which seizes on the imagination and memory, which agitates the soul to its centre? Who is the man whom you select from the records of time as the object of your special admiration? Is it he, who lived to indulge himself? whose current of life



flowed most equably and pleurably? whose desires were crowned most liberally with means of gratification? whose table was most luxuriantly spread? and whom fortune made the envy of his neighbourhood by the fulness of her gifts? Were such the men to whom monuments have been reared, and whose memories, freshened with tears of joy and reverence, grow and flourish and spread through every age? Oh no! He whom we love, whose honor we most covet, is he who has most denied and subdued himself; who has made the most entire sacrifice of appetites and passions and private interest to God, and virtue, and mankind; who has walked in a rugged path, and clung to good and great ends in persecution and pain; who amidst the solicitations of ambition, ease, and private friendship and the menaces of tyranny and malice, has listened to the voice of conscience, and found a recompense for blighted hopes and protracted suffering, in conscious uprightness and the favour of God. Who is it that is most lovely in domestic life? It is the Martyr to domestic affection, the mother forgetting herself, and ready to toil, suffer, die for the happiness and virtue of her children. Who is it that we honour in public life? It is the Martyr to his country, he who serves her, not when she has honours for his brow and wealth for his coffers, but who clings to her in danger and falling glories, and thinks life a cheap sacrifice to her safety and freedom. Whom does the church retain in most grateful remembrance, and pronounce holy and blessed? The self-denying, self-immolating apostle, the fearless confessor, the devoted martyr, men who have held fast the truth even in death, and bequeathed it to future

ages amidst blood. Above all, to what moment of the life of Jesus does the Christian turn as the most affecting and sublime illustration of his divine character? It is that moment, when, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, denying every human passion, and casting away every earthly interest, he bore the agony and shame of the cross. Thus all great virtues bear the impress of self-denial; and were God's present constitution of our nature and life so reversed as to demand no renunciation of desire, the chief interest and glory of our present being would pass away. There would be nothing in history to thrill us with admiration. We should have no consciousness of the power and greatness of the soul. We should love feebly and coldly, for we should find nothing in one another to love earnestly. Let us not, then, complain of Providence because it has made self-denial necessary; or complain of religion, because it summons us to this work. Religion and nature here hold one language. Our own souls bear witness to the teaching of Christ, that it is the "narrow way" of self-denial "which leadeth unto life."

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#### HONOUR ALL MEN.

Honour man, from the beginning to the end of his earthly course. Honour the child. Welcome into being the infant, with a feeling of its mysterious grandeur, with the feeling, that an immortal existence has begun, that a spirit has been kindled which is never to be quenched. Honour the child. On this principle, all good education rests. Never shall we learn to train up the child, till we take it in our arms, as Jesus did, and feel distinctly that "of such is the king-

dom of heaven." In that short sentence is taught the spirit of the true system of education ; and for want of understanding it, little effectual aid, I fear, is yet given to the heavenly principle in the infant soul.—Again. Honour the poor. This sentiment of respect is essential to improving the connexion between the more and less prosperous conditions of society. This alone makes beneficence truly godlike. Without it, almsgiving degrades the receiver. We must learn how slight and shadowy are the distinctions between us and the poor ; and that the last in outward condition may be the first in the best attributes of humanity. A fraternal union, founded on this deep conviction, and intended to lift up and strengthen the exposed and tempted poor, is to do infinitely more for that suffering class, than all our artificial associations ; and till Christianity shall have breathed into us this spirit of respect for our nature, wherever it is found, we shall do them little good. I conceive, that in the present low state of Christian virtue, we little apprehend the power which might be exerted over the fallen and destitute, by a benevolence which should truly, thoroughly recognise in them the image of God.

Perhaps none of us have yet heard or can comprehend the tone of voice, in which a man, thoroughly impressed with this sentiment, would speak to a fellow-creature. It is a language hardly known on earth ; and no eloquence, I believe, has achieved such wonders as it is destined to accomplish. The faith which is most wanted, is a faith in what we and our fellow-beings may become, a faith in the divine germ or principle in every soul. In regard to most of

what are called the mysteries of religion, we may innocently be ignorant. But the mystery within ourselves, the mystery of our spiritual, accountable, immortal nature, it behoves us to explore. Happy are they who have begun to penetrate it, and in whom it has awakened feelings of awe towards themselves, and of deep interest and honour towards their fellow-creatures.

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CHRISTIAN MEEKNESS.

I read in the Scriptures the praises of meekness. But when I see a man meek or patient of injury through tameness, or insensibility, or want of self-respect, passively gentle, meek through constitution or fear, I look on him with feelings very different from veneration. It is the meekness of principle; it is mildness replete with energy; it is the forbearance of a man who feels a wrong, but who curbs anger, who though injured resolves to be just, who voluntarily remembers that his foe is a man and a brother, who dreads to surrender himself to his passions, who in the moment of provocation subjects himself to reason and religion, and who holds fast the great truth, that the noblest victory over a foe is to disarm and subdue him by equity and kindness,—it is this meekness which I venerate, and which seems to me one of the divinest virtues. It is moral power, the strength of virtuous purpose, pervading meekness, which gives it all its title to respect.

It is worthy of special remark, that without this moral energy, resisting passion and impulse, our tenderest attachments degenerate more or less into weaknesses and immoralities; sometimes prompting us to sympathize with those

whom we love, in their errors, prejudices, and evil passions; sometimes inciting us to heap upon them injurious praises and indulgences; sometimes urging us to wrong or neglect others, that we may the more enjoy or serve our favourites; and sometimes poisoning our breasts with jealousy or envy, because our affection is not returned with equal warmth. The principle of love, whether exercised towards our relatives or our country, whether manifested in courtesy or compassion, can only become virtue, can only acquire purity, consistency, serenity, dignity, when imbued, swayed, cherished, enlarged by the power of virtuous will, by a self-denying energy. It is Inward Force, power over ourselves, which is the beginning and the end of virtue.

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#### THE SUBJECT'S DUTY IN AN UNJUST WAR.

It will be asked, "And is not the citizen bound to fight at the call of his government? Does not his commission absolve him from the charge of murder and enormous crime? Is not obedience to the sovereign power the very foundation on which society rests?" I answer, "Has the duty of obeying government no bounds? Is the human sovereign a God? Is his sovereignty absolute? If he command you to slay a parent, must you obey? If he forbid you to worship God, must you obey? Have you no right to judge his acts? Have you no self-direction? Is there no unchangeable right which the ruler cannot touch? Is there no higher standard than human law?" These questions answer themselves. A declaration of war cannot sanction wrong, or turn murder into a virtuous deed.



Public life is thought to absolve men from the strict obligations of truth and justice. To wrong an adverse party or another country, is not reprobated as are wrongs in private life. Thus duty is dethroned; thus the majesty of virtue insulted in the administration of nations. Public men are expected to think more of their own elevation than of their country. Is the city of Washington the most virtuous spot in this republic? Is it the school of incorruptible men? The hall of Congress, disgraced by so many brawls, swayed by local interest and party intrigues, in which the right of petition is trodden under foot,—is this the oracle from which the responses of justice come forth? Public bodies want conscience. Men acting in masses, shift off responsibility on one another. Multitudes never blush. If these things be true, then I maintain, that the Christian has not a right to take part in war blindly, confidingly, at the call of his rulers. To shed the blood of fellow-creatures, is too solemn a work to be engaged in lightly. Let him not put himself, a tool, into wicked hands. Let him not meet on the field his brother man, his brother Christian, in a cause on which heaven frowns. Let him bear witness against unholy wars, as his country's greatest crimes. If called to take part in them, let him deliberately refuse. If martial law seize on him, let him submit. If hurried to prison, let him submit. If brought thence to be shot, let him submit. There must be martyrs to peace, as truly as to other principles of our religion. The first Christians chose to die, rather than obey the laws of the state which commanded them to renounce their Lord. "Death rather than crime;" such is the good



man's watchword, such the Christian's vow. Let him be faithful unto death.

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PROSPERITY NO SECURITY AGAINST WAR.

Nothing, nothing can bind nations together but Christian justice and love. I insist on this the more earnestly, because it is the fashion now to trust for every good to commerce, industry, and the wonderful inventions, which promise indefinite increase of wealth. But to improve man's outward condition, is not to improve man himself, and this is the sole ground of hope. With all our ingenuity, we can frame no machinery for manufacturing wisdom, virtue, peace. Rail-roads and steam-boats cannot speed the soul to its perfection. This must come, if it come at all, from each man's action on himself, from putting forth our power on the soul and not over nature, from a sense of inward not outward miseries, from "hunger and thirst after righteousness," not after wealth. I should rejoice, like the prophet, "to bring glad tidings, to publish peace." But I do fear, that without some great spiritual revolution, without some new life and love breathed into the church, without some deep social reforms, men will turn against each other their new accumulations of power; that their wealth and boasted inventions will be converted into weapons of destruction; that the growing prosperity of nations will become the nutriment of more wasteful wars, will become fuel for more devouring fires of ambition or revenge.

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THE REMEDY FOR WAR.

War will never yield but to the principles of universal justice and love, and these have no

sure root but in the religion of Jesus Christ. Christianity is the true remedy for war; not Christianity in name, not such Christianity as we see, not such as has grown up under arbitrary governments in church and state, not such as characterizes any Christian sect at the present day, but Christianity as it lived in the soul and came forth in the life of its founder; a religion, that reveals man as the object of God's infinite love, and which commends him to the unbounded love of his brethren; a religion, the essence of which is self-denial, self-sacrifice, in the cause of human nature; a religion, which proscribes, as among the worst sins, the passion of man for rule and dominion over his fellow-creatures; which knows nothing of rich or poor, high or low, bond or free, and casts down all the walls of partition which sever men from one another's sympathy and respect.

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#### COURAGE.

Still, courage considered in itself, or without reference to its origin and motives, and regarded in its common manifestations, is not virtue, is not moral excellence; and the disposition to exalt it above the spirit of Christianity, is one of the most ruinous delusions which have been transmitted to us from barbarous times. In most men, courage has its origin in happy organization of the body. It belongs to the nerves rather than the character. In some, it is an instinct bordering on rashness. In one man, it springs from strong passions obscuring the idea of danger. In another, from the want of imagination or from the incapacity of bringing future evils near. The courage of the uneducated may often be traced

to stupidity ; to the absence of thought and sensibility. Many are courageous from the dread of the infamy absurdly attached to cowardice. One terror expels another. A bullet is less formidable than a sneer. To show the moral worthlessness of mere courage, of contempt of bodily suffering and pain, one consideration is sufficient ;—the most abandoned have possessed it in perfection. The villain often hardens into the thorough hero, if courage and heroism be one. The more complete his success in searing conscience and defying God, the more dauntless his daring. Long-continued vice and exposure naturally generate contempt of life and a reckless encounter of peril. Courage, considered in itself or without reference to its causes, is no virtue, and deserves no esteem. It is found in the best and the worst, and is to be judged according to the qualities from which it springs and with which it is conjoined. There is in truth a virtuous, glorious courage ; but it happens to be found least in those who are most admired for bravery. It is the courage of principle, which dares to do right in the face of scorn, which puts to hazard reputation, rank, the prospects of advancement, the sympathy of friends, the admiration of the world, rather than violate a conviction of duty. It is the courage of benevolence and piety, which counts not life dear in withstanding error, superstition, vice, oppression, injustice, and the mightiest foes of human improvement and happiness. It is moral energy, that force of will in adopting duty, over which menace and suffering have no power. It is the courage of a soul, which reverences itself too much to be greatly moved about what befalls the

body; which thirsts so intensely for a pure inward life, that it can yield up the animal life without fear; in which the idea of moral, spiritual, celestial good, has been unfolded so brightly as to obscure all worldly interests; which aspires after immortality, and therefore heeds little the pains or pleasures of a day; which has so concentrated its whole power and life in the love of godlike virtue, that it even finds a joy in the perils and sufferings by which its loyalty to God and virtue may be approved. This courage may be called the perfection of humanity, for it is the exercise, result, and expression of the highest attributes of our nature.

It is time that the old, barbarous, indiscriminate worship of mere courage should give place to a wise moral judgment. This fanaticism has done much to rob Christianity of its due honour. Men, who give their sympathies and homage to the fiery and destructive valour of the soldier, will see little attraction in the mild and peaceful spirit of Jesus. His unconquerable forbearance, the most genuine and touching expression of his divine philanthropy, may even seem to them a weakness. We read of those who, surrounding the cross, derided the meek sufferer. They did it in their ignorance. More guilty, more insensible are those, who, living under the light of Christianity, and yielding it their assent, do not see in that cross, a glory which pours contempt on the warrior. Will this delusion never cease? Will men never learn to reverence disinterested love? Shall the desolations and woes of ages bear their testimony in vain against the false glory which has so long dazzled the world? Shall Christ, shall moral perfection, shall the

spirit of heaven, shall God manifest in his Son, be for ever insulted by the worship paid to the spirit of savage hordes? Shall the cross ostentatiously worn on the breast, never come to the heart, a touching emblem and teacher of all-suffering love.

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#### SYMPATHY WITH THE POOR.

Go forth, then my friends, with a confiding spirit. Go forth in the strength of faith, hope, and charity. Go forth to increase the holiness of earth, and the happiness of heaven. Go to the dark alleys and the darker dwellings of the poor. Go in the spirit of that God, to whom the soul of the poor man is as precious as your own. Go in the spirit of him, who for our sakes was poor, and had not where to lay his head. Go in reliance on that omnipotent grace, which can raise up the most fallen, cleanse the most polluted, enrich the poorest with more than royal wealth, console the deepest sorrows, and sanctify the sorest trials of life. Go cheerfully, for into the darkest dwellings you carry the light of life. And think not that you alone visit these humble habitations. God is there—Christ is there—angels are there. Feel their presence; breathe their love; and through your wise, unwearied, effectual labours, may the poor man's dwelling become a consecrated place, the abode of love, "the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

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#### SYMPATHY WITH EVERY CHURCH.

It is one sign of the tendency of human nature to goodness, that it grows good under a thousand bad influences. The Romish Church is illustrated by great names. Her gloomy convents have



often been brightened by fervent love to God and man. Her St. Louis, and Fenelon, and Massillon, and Cheverus ; her missionaries who have carried Christianity to the ends of the earth ; her sisters of charity who have carried relief and solace to the most hopeless want and pain ; do not these teach us, that in the Romish church the Spirit of God has found a home ? How much, too, have other churches to boast ! In the English church, we meet the names of Latimer, Hooker, Barrow, Leighton, Berkely, and Heber ; in the dissenting Calvinistic church, Baxter, Howe, Watts, Doddridge, and Robert Hall ; among the Quakers, George Fox, William Penn, Robert Barclay, and our own Anthony Benezet and John Woolman ; in the Anti-trinitarian church, John Milton, John Locke, Samuel Clarke, Price, and Priestley. To repeat these names does the heart good. They breathe a fragrance through the common air. They lift up the whole race to which they belong. With the churches of which they were pillars or chief ornaments, I have many sympathies ; nor do I condemn the union of ourselves to these or any other churches whose doctrines we approve, provided that we do it, without severing ourselves in the least from the universal church. On this point we cannot be too earnest. We must shun the spirit of sectarianism, as from hell. We must shudder at the thought of shutting up God in any denomination. We must think no man the better for belonging to our communion ; no man the worse for belonging to another. We must look with undiminished joy on goodness, though it shine forth from the most adverse sect. Christ's spirit must be equally dear and honoured, no matter



where manifested. To confine God's love or his good spirit to any party, sect, or name, is to sin against the fundamental law of the kingdom of God; to break that living bond with Christ's universal church, which is one of our chief helps to perfection.

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SIN.

The word Sin, I apprehend, is to many obscure, or not sufficiently plain. It is a word seldom used in common life. It belongs to theology and the pulpit. By not a few people, sin is supposed to be a property of our nature, born with us; and we sometimes hear of a child as being sinful before it can have performed any action. From these and other causes, the word gives to many, confused notions. Sin, in its true sense, is the violation of duty, and cannot, consequently, exist, before conscience has begun to act, and before power to obey it is unfolded. To sin is to resist our sense of right, to oppose known obligation, to cherish feelings, or commit deeds which we know to be wrong. It is, to withhold from God the reverence, gratitude, and obedience, which our own consciences pronounce to be due to that great and good Being. It is, to transgress those laws of equity, justice, candour, humanity, disinterestedness, which we all feel to belong and to answer to our various social relations. It is, to yield ourselves to those appetites which we know to be the inferior principles of our nature, to give the body a mastery over the mind, to sacrifice the intellect and heart to the senses, to surrender ourselves to ease and indulgence, or to prefer outward accumulation and power, to strength and peace of conscience, to

progress towards perfection. Such is sin. It is voluntary wrong-doing. Any gratification injurious to ourselves, is sin. The transgression of any command which this excellent Being and rightful Sovereign has given us, whether by conscience or revelation, is sin. So broad is this term. It is as extensive as duty. It is not some mysterious thing wrought into our souls at birth. It is not a theological subtilty. It is choosing and acting in opposition to our sense of right, to known obligation.

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#### SIN WORSE THAN PUNISHMENT.

Ask multitudes, what is the chief evil from which Christ came to save them, and they will tell you, "From hell, from penal fires, from future punishment." Accordingly, they think that salvation is something which another may achieve for them, very much as a neighbour may quench a conflagration that menaces their dwellings and lives. That word hell, which is used so seldom in the sacred pages, which, in a faithful translation, would not once occur in the writings of Paul, and Peter, and John; which we meet only in four or five discourses of Jesus, and which all persons, acquainted with Jewish geography, know to be a metaphor, a figure of speech, and not a literal expression; this word, by a perverse and exaggerated use, has done unspeakable injury to Christianity. It has possessed and diseased men's imaginations with outward tortures, shrieks, and flames; given them the idea of an outward ruin as what they have chiefly to dread; turned their thoughts to Jesus, as an outward deliverer; and thus blinded them to his true glory, which consists in his setting

free and exalting the soul. Men are flying from an outward hell, when in truth they carry within them the hell which they should chiefly dread. The salvation which man chiefly needs, and that which brings with it all other deliverance, is salvation from the evil of his own mind. There is something far worse than outward punishment. It is sin; it is the state of the soul, which has revolted from God, and cast off its allegiance to conscience and the divine word; which renounces its Father, and hardens itself against Infinite Love; which, endued with divine powers, enthralled itself to animal lusts; which makes gain its god; which has capacities of boundless and ever-growing love, and shuts itself up in the dungeon of private interests; which, gifted with a self-directing power, consents to be a slave, and is passively formed by custom, opinion, and changing events; which, living under God's eye, dreads man's frown or scorn, and prefers human praise to its own calm consciousness of virtue; which tamely yields to temptation, shrinks with a coward's baseness from the perils of duty, and sacrifices its glory and peace in parting with self-control. No ruin can be compared to this. This the impenitent man carries with him beyond the grave, and there meets its natural issue, and inevitable retribution, in remorse, self-torture, and woes unknown on earth. This we cannot too strongly fear. To save, in the highest sense of that word, is to lift the fallen spirit from this depth, to heal the diseased mind, to restore it to energy and freedom of thought, conscience, and love. This was chiefly the salvation for which Christ shed his blood. For this the holy spirit is given; and to this all the truths of Christianity conspire.

Gross ideas of futurity still prevail. I should not be surprised if to some among us the chief idea of heaven were that of a splendour, a radiance, like that which Christ wore on the Mount of Transfiguration. Let us all consider, and it is a great truth, that heaven has no lustre surpassing that of intellectual and moral worth; and that, were the effulgence of the sun and stars concentrated in the Christian, even this would be darkness, compared with the pure beamings of wisdom, love, and power from his mind.

The very religion given to exalt human nature, has been used to make it abject. The very religion which was given to create a generous hope, has been made an instrument of servile and torturing fear. The very religion which came from God's goodness to enlarge the human soul with a kindred goodness, has been employed to narrow it to a sect, to rear the Inquisition, and to kindle fires for the martyr. The very religion given to make the understanding and conscience free, has, by a criminal perversion, served to break them into subjection to priests, ministers, and human creeds.

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#### THE PUNISHMENT OF INJUSTICE.

No fellow-creature can be injured, without taking terrible vengeance. He is terribly avenged even now. The blight which falls on the soul of the wrong-doer, the desolation of his moral nature, is a more terrible calamity than he inflicts. In deadening his moral feelings, he dies to the proper happiness of a man. In hardening his heart against his fellow-creatures, he sears it to all true joy. In shutting his ear against the voice of justice, he shuts out all the harmonies of the

universe, and turns the voice of God within him into rebuke. No punishment is so terrible as prosperous guilt. No fiend, exhausting on us all his power of torture, is so fearful as an oppressed fellow-creature. The cry of the oppressed, unheard on earth, is heard in heaven. God is just, and if justice reign, then the unjust must terribly suffer. Then no being can profit by evil-doing. Then all the laws of the universe are ordinances against guilt. Then every enjoyment gained by wrong-doing will be turned into a curse. No laws of nature are so irrevocable as that law which binds guilt and misery. God is just. Then all the defences, which the oppressor rears against the consequences of wrong-doing, are vain, as vain as would be his strivings to arrest by his single arm the ocean or whirlwind. He may disarm the slave. Can he disarm that slave's Creator? He can crush the spirit of insurrection in a fellow-being. Can he crush the awful spirit of justice and retribution in the Almighty? He can still the murmur of discontent in his victim. Can he silence that voice which speaks in thunder, and is to break the sleep of the grave? Can he always still the reproving, avenging voice in his own breast?

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#### THE VICTIMS OF DRUNKENNESS.

In truth, when we recall the sad histories of not a few in every circle, who once stood among the firmest and then yielded to temptation, we are taught, that none of us should dismiss fear, that we too may be walking on the edge of the abyss. The young are exposed to intemperance, for youth wants forethought, loves excitement, is apt to place happiness in gaiety, is prone to



convivial pleasure, and too often finds or makes this the path to hell; nor are the old secure, for age unnerves the mind as well as the body, and silently steals away the power of self-control. The idle are in scarcely less peril than the overworked labourer; for uneasy cravings spring up in the vacant mind, and the excitement of intoxicating draughts is greedily sought as an escape from the intolerable weariness of having nothing to do. Men of a coarse, unrefined character, fall easily into intemperance, because they see little in its brutality to disgust them. It is a sadder thought that men of genius and sensibility are hardly less exposed. Strong action of the mind is even more exhausting than the toil of the hands. It uses up, if I may so say, the finer spirits, and leaves either a sinking of the system which craves for tonics, or a restlessness which seeks relief in deceitful sedatives. Besides, it is natural for minds of great energy, to hunger for strong excitement; and this, when not found in innocent occupation and amusement, is too often sought in criminal indulgence. These remarks apply peculiarly to men whose genius is poetical, imaginative, allied with and quickened by peculiar sensibility. Such men, living in worlds of their own creation, kindling themselves with ideal beauty and joy, and too often losing themselves in reveries, in which imagination ministers to appetite, and the sensual, triumphs over the spiritual nature, are peculiarly in danger of losing the balance of the mind, of losing calm thought, clear judgment and moral strength of will, become children of impulse, learn to despise simple and common pleasures, and are hurried to ruin by a feverish thirst of high-wrought, delirious



gratification. In such men, these mental causes of excess are often aggravated by peculiar irritableness of the nervous system. Hence the records of literature are so sad. Hence the brightest lights of the intellectual world have so often undergone disastrous eclipse; and the inspired voice of genius, so thrilling, so exalting, has died away in the brutal or idiot cries of intemperance. I have now been speaking of the highest order of intellectual men; but it may be said of men of education in general, that they must not feel themselves beyond peril. It is said, that as large a proportion of intemperate men can be found among those, who have gone through our colleges, as among an equal number of men in the same sphere of life, who have not enjoyed the same culture. It must not, however, be inferred, that the cultivation of the intellect affords no moral aids. The truth is, that its good tendencies are thwarted. Educated men fall victims to temptation as often as other men, not because education is inoperative, but because our public seminaries give a partial training, being directed almost wholly to the development of the intellect, and very little to moral culture, and still less to the invigoration of the physical system. Another cause of the evil is probably this, that young men, liberally educated, enter on professions which give at first little or no occupation, which expose them, perhaps for years, to the temptations of leisure, the most perilous in an age of inexperience and passion. Accordingly, the ranks of intemperance are recruited from that class which forms the chief hope of society. And I would I could stop here. But there is another prey on which intemperance seizes, still more to be deplored,

and that is Woman. I know no sight on earth more sad, than woman's countenance, which once knew no suffusion but the glow of exquisite feeling, or the blush of hallowed modesty, crimsoned, deformed by intemperance. Even woman is not safe. The delicacy of her physical organisation exposes her to inequalities of feeling, which tempt to the seductive relief given by cordials. Man with his iron nerves little knows what the sensitive frame of woman suffers, how many desponding imaginations throng on her in her solitudes, how often she is exhausted by unremitting cares, and how much the power of self-control is impaired by repeated derangements of her frail system. The truth should be told. In all our families, no matter what their condition, there are endangered individuals, and fear and watchfulness in regard to intemperance belong to all.

Do not say, that I exaggerate your exposure to intemperance. Let no man say, when he thinks of the drunkard, broken in health and spoiled of intellect, "I can never so fall." He thought as little of falling in his earlier years. The promise of his youth was as bright as yours; and even after he began his downward course, he was as unsuspecting as the firmest around him, and would have repelled as indignantly the admonition to beware of intemperance. The danger of this vice lies in its almost imperceptible approach. Few who perish by it know its first accesses. Youth does not see or suspect drunkenness in the sparkling beverage, which quickens all its susceptibilities of joy. The invalid does not see it in the cordial, which his physician prescribes, and which gives new tone to his

debilitated organs. The man of thought and genius detects no palsyng poison in the draught, which seems a spring of inspiration to intellect and imagination. The lover of social pleasure little dreams, that the glass, which animates conversation, will ever be drunk in solitude, and will sink him too low for the intercourse in which he now delights. Intemperance comes with noiseless step, and binds its first cords with a touch too light to be felt. This truth of mournful experience should be treasured up by us all, and should influence the habits and arrangements of domestic and social life, in every class of the community.

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#### RETRIBUTION HEREAFTER.

I proceed now to an important and solemn remark, an illustration of the evil of sin. It is plainly implied in Scripture, that we shall suffer much more from sin, evil temper, irreligion, in the future world, than we suffer here. This is one main distinction between the two states. In the present world, sin does indeed bring with it many pains, but not full or exact retribution, and sometimes it seems crowned with prosperity; and the cause of this is obvious. The present world is a state for the formation of character. It is meant to be a state of trial, where we are to act freely, to have opportunities of wrong as well as right action, and to become virtuous amidst temptation. Now such a purpose requires, that sin, or wrong-doing, should not regularly and infallibly produce its full and immediate punishment. For, suppose, my hearers, that at the very instant of a bad purpose or a bad deed, a sore and awful penalty were unfailingly to light upon you;

would this be consistent with trial? would you have moral freedom? would you not live under compulsion? Who would do wrong, if judgment were to come like lightning after every evil deed? In such a world, fear would suspend our liberty and supersede conscience. Accordingly sin, though, as we have seen, it produces great misery, is still left to compass many of its objects, often to prosper, often to be gain. Vice, bad as it is, has often many pleasures in its train. The worst men partake, equally with the good, the light of the sun, the rain, the harvest, the accommodations and improvements of civilized life, and sometimes accumulate more largely outward goods. And thus sin has its pleasures, and escapes many of its natural and proper fruits. We live in a world where, if we please, we may forget ourselves, may delude ourselves, may intoxicate our minds with false hopes, and may find for a time, a deceitful joy in an evil course. In this respect the future will differ from the present world. After death, character will produce its full effect. According to the Scriptures, the colour of our future existence will be wholly determined by the habits and principles which we carry into it. The circumstances which in this life prevent vice, sin, wrong-doing, from inflicting pain, will not operate hereafter. There the evil mind will be exposed to its own terrible agency, and nothing, nothing will interfere between the transgressor and his own awakened conscience. I ask you to pause, and weigh this distinction between the present and the future. In the present life, we have, as I have said, the means of escaping, amusing, and forgetting ourselves. Once, in the course of every daily

revolution of the sun, we all of us find refuge, and many a long refuge, in sleep; and he who has lived without God, and in violation of his duty, hears not, for hours, a whisper of the monitor within. But sleep is a function of our present animal frame, and let not the transgressor anticipate this boon in the world of retribution before him. It may be, and he has reason to fear, that in that state repose will not weigh down his eyelids, that conscience will not slumber there, that night and day the same reproaching voice is to cry within, that unrepented sin will fasten with unrelaxing grasp on the ever-waking soul. What an immense change in condition would the removal of this single alleviation of suffering produce!

It seems to me probable, that, in the future, the whole creation will, through sin, be turned into a source of suffering, and will perpetually throw back the evil mind on its own transgressions. I can briefly state the reflections which lead to this anticipation. The Scriptures strongly imply, if not positively teach, that in the future life we shall exist in connexion with some material frame; and the doctrine is sustained by reason; for it can hardly be thought, that in a creation which is marked by gradual change and progress, we should make at once the mighty transition from our present state into a purely spiritual or unembodied existence. Now in the present state we find, that the mind has an immense power over the body, and when diseased, often communicates disease to its sympathizing companion. I believe, that, in the future state, the mind will have this power of conforming its outward frame to itself, incomparably more than



here. We must never forget, that in that world, mind or character is to exert an all-powerful sway; and accordingly, it is rational to believe, that the corrupt and deformed mind, which wants moral goodness, or a spirit of concord with God and with the universe, will create for itself, as its fit dwelling, a deformed body, which will also want concord or harmony with all things around it. Suppose this to exist, and the whole creation which now amuses, may become an instrument of suffering, fixing the soul with a more harrowing consciousness on itself. You know that even now, in consequence of certain derangements of the nervous system, the beautiful light gives acute pain, and sounds, which once delighted us, become shrill and distressing. How often this excessive irritableness of the body has its origin in moral disorders, perhaps few of us suspect. I apprehend, indeed, that we should be all amazed, were we to learn to what extent the body is continually incapacitated for enjoyment, and made susceptible of suffering, by sins of the heart and life. That delicate part of our organization, on which sensibility, pain, and pleasure depend, is, I believe, peculiarly alive to the touch of moral evil. How easily, then, may the mind hereafter frame the future body according to itself, so that, in proportion to its vice, it will receive, through its organs and senses, impressions of gloom, which it will feel to be the natural productions of its own depravity, and which will in this way give a terrible energy to conscience! For myself, I see no need of a local hell for the sinner after death. When I reflect, how, in the present world, a guilty mind has power to deform the countenance, to undermine health, to poison



pleasure, to darken the fairest scenes of nature, to turn prosperity into a curse, I can easily understand how in the world to come, sin, working without obstruction according to its own nature, should spread the gloom of a dungeon over the whole creation, and, wherever it goes, should turn the universe into a hell.

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#### THE LORD'S DAY.

To us it is a more important day, and consecrated to nobler purposes than the ancient Sabbath. We are bound, however, to state, that we cannot acquiesce in the distinctions which are often made between this and other days, for they seem to us at once ungrounded and pernicious. We sometimes hear, for example, that the Lord's day is set apart from our common lives to religion. What! Are not all days equally set apart to religion? Has religion more to do with Sunday than with any other portion of time? Is there any season, over which piety should not preside? So the day is sometimes distinguished as "holy." What! Is there stronger obligation to holiness on one day than on another? Is it more holy to pray in the church than to pray in the closet, or than to withstand temptation in common life? The true distinction of Sunday is, that it is consecrated to certain means or direct acts of religion. But these are not holier than other duties. They are certainly not more important than their end, which is a virtuous life. There is, we fear, a superstition on this point, unworthy of the illumination of Christianity. We earnestly recommend the Lord's-day, but we dare not esteem its duties above those of other days. We prize and recommend it as an

institution through which our whole lives are to be sanctified and ennobled; and without this fruit, vain, and worse than vain, are the most rigid observances, the most costly sacrifices, the loudest and most earnest prayers. We would on no account disparage the offices of the Lord's-day. We delight in this peaceful season, so fitted to allay the feverish heat and anxieties of active life, to cherish self-communion, and communion with God and with the world to come. It is good to meet as brethren, in the church to pray together, to hear the word of God, to retire for a time from ordinary labours, that we may meditate on great truths more deliberately, and with more continuous attention. In these duties we see a fitness, excellence, and happiness; but still, if a comparison must be made, they seem to us less striking proofs of piety and virtue, than are found in the disinterestedness, the self-control, the love of truth, the scorn of ill-gotten wealth, the unshaken trust in God, the temperate and grateful enjoyment, the calm and courageous sufferings for duty, to which the Christian is called in daily life. It is right to adore God's goodness in the hour of prayer; but does it not seem more excellent to carry in our souls the conviction of this goodness, as our spring and pattern, and to breathe it forth in acts conformed to the beneficence of our Maker? It is good to seek strength from God in the church; but does it not seem more excellent, to use well this strength in the sore conflicts of life, and to rise through it to a magnanimous and victorious virtue? Such comparisons, however, we have no pleasure in making, and they are obviously exposed to error. The enlightened Christian

“esteemeth every day alike.” To him, all days bring noble duties ; bring occasions of a celestial piety and virtue ; bring trials, in wrestling with which he may grow strong ; bring aids and incitements, through which he may rise above himself.

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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER.

He is to speak of God, the King and Father Eternal, whose praise no tongue of men or angels can worthily set forth. He is to speak of the soul, that ray of the Divinity, the partaker of God’s own immortality, to which the outward universe was made to minister, and which, if true to itself, will one day be clad with a beauty and grandeur such as nature’s loveliest and sublimest scenery never wears. He is to speak, not of this world only, but of invisible and more advanced states of being ; of a world too spiritual for the fleshly eye to see, but of which a presage and earnest may be found in the enlightened and purified mind. He has to speak of virtue, of human perfection, of the love which is due to the Universal Father and to fellow-beings, of the intercourse of the soul with its Creator, and of all the duties of life as hallowed and elevated by a reverence to God and to the future world. He has to speak of sin, that essential evil, that only evil, which, by its unutterable fearfulness, makes all other calamities unworthy of the name. He is to treat, not of ordinary life, nor of the most distinguished agents in ordinary history, but of God’s supernatural interpositions ; of his most sensible and immediate providence ; of men inspired and empowered to work the most important revolutions in society ; and especially of

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the theme of prophecy, the revealer of grace and truth, the saviour from sin, the conqueror of death, who hath left us an example of immaculate virtue, whose love passeth knowledge, and whose history, combining the strange and touching contrasts of the cross, the resurrection, and a heavenly throne, surpasses all other records in interest and grandeur. He has to speak, not of transitory concerns, but of happiness and misery transcending in duration and degree the most joyful and suffering condition of the present state. He has to speak of the faintly shadowed, but solemn consummation of this world's eventful history; of the coming of the Son of Man, the resurrection, the judgment, the retributions of the last day. Here are subjects of intense interest. They claim and should call forth the mind's whole power, and are infinitely wronged when uttered with cold lips, and from an unmoved heart.

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#### DEDICATION OF A CHURCH.

We end, as we began, by offering up this building to the Only Living and True God. We have erected it amidst our private habitations, as a remembrancer of our Creator. We have reared it in this busy city, as a retreat for pious meditation and prayer. We dedicate it to the King and Father Eternal, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. We dedicate it to his Unity, to his unrivalled and undivided Majesty. We dedicate it to the praise of his free, unbought, unmerited grace. We dedicate it to Jesus Christ, to the memory of his love, to the celebration of his divine virtue, to the preaching of that truth, which he sealed with blood. We dedicate

it to the Holy Spirit, to the sanctifying influence of God, to those celestial emanations of light and strength, which visit and refresh the devout mind. We dedicate it to prayers and praises, which we trust will be continued and perfected in heaven. We dedicate it to social worship, to Christian intercourse, to the communion of saints. We dedicate it to the cause of pure morals, of public order, of temperance, uprightness, and general good will. We dedicate it to Christian admonition, to those warnings, remonstrances, and earnest and tender persuasions, by which the sinner may be arrested, and brought back to God. We dedicate it to Christian consolation, to those truths which assuage sorrow, animate penitence, and lighten the load of human anxiety and fear. We dedicate it to the doctrine of Immortality, to sublime and joyful hopes which reach beyond the grave. In a word, we dedicate it to the great work of perfecting the human soul, and fitting it for nearer approach to its Author. Here may heart meet heart. Here may man meet God. From this place may the song of praise, the ascription of gratitude, the sigh of penitence, the prayer for grace, and the holy resolve, ascend as fragrant incense to Heaven; and through many generations, may parents bequeath to their children this house, as a sacred spot, where God had "lifted upon them his countenance," and given them pledges of his everlasting love.

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#### WOMAN'S WORK.

What, let me ask, is woman's work? It is to be a minister of Christian love. It is to sympathize with human misery. It is to breathe



sympathy into man's heart. It is to keep alive in society some feeling of human brotherhood. This is her mission on earth. Woman's sphere, I am told, is home. And why is home instituted? Why are domestic relations ordained? These relations are for a day; they cease at the grave. And what is their great end? To nourish a love which will endure for ever,—to awaken universal sympathy. Our ties to our parents are to bind us to the Universal Parent; our fraternal bonds to help us to see in all men our brethren. Home is to be a nursery of Christians; and what is the end of Christianity but to awaken in all souls the principles of universal justice and universal charity? At home we are to learn to love our neighbour, our enemy, the stranger, the poor, the oppressed. If home do not train us to this, then it is woefully perverted. If home counteract and quench the spirit of Christianity, then we must remember the Divine Teacher, who commands us to forsake father and mother, brother and sister, wife and child, for His sake, and for the sake of his truth. If the walls of home are the bulwarks of a narrow, clannish love, through which the cry of human miseries and wrongs cannot penetrate, then it is a mockery to talk of their sacredness. Domestic life is, at present, too much in hostility to the spirit of Christ. A family should be a community of dear friends, strengthening one another for the service of their fellow-creatures.

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#### THE TEACHER'S FAITH.

You must have faith in God; and by this I do not mean a general belief of his existence and perfection, but a faith in him as the father and



friend of the children whom you instruct, as desiring their progress more than all human friends, and as most ready to aid you in your efforts for their good. You must not feel yourselves alone. You must not think when you enter the place of teaching, that only you and your pupils are present, and that you have nothing but your own power and wisdom to rely on for success. You must feel a higher presence. You must feel that the Father of these children is near you, and that he loves them with a boundless love. Do not think of God as interested only in higher orders of beings, or only in great and distinguished men. The little child is as dear to him as the hero, as the philosopher, as the angel; for in that child are the germs of an angel's powers, and God has called him into being that he may become an angel.

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#### THE SOUL, THE TRUE TEMPLE.

Christ came not to build churches, not to rear cathedrals with Gothic arches, or swelling domes, but to dedicate the human soul to God. When God "bows the heavens and comes down," it is not that he may take up his abode beneath the vault of a metropolitan temple; it is not that he is drawn by majestic spires or by clouds of fragrance, but that he may visit and dwell in the humble, obedient, disinterested soul. This house is to moulder away. Temples hewn from the rock will crumble to dust, or melt in the last fire. But the inward temple will survive all outward change. When winds and oceans and suns shall have ceased to praise God, the human soul will praise him. It will receive more and more divine inspirations of truth and love; will fill

with its benevolent ministry wider and wider spheres; and will accomplish its destiny by a progress towards God, as unlimited, as mysterious, as enduring as eternity.

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#### TRUE CONSECRATION.

It is common to speak of the house of public worship as a holy place; but it has no exclusive sanctity. The holiest spot on earth is that where the soul breathes its purest vows, and forms or executes its noblest purposes; and on this ground were I to seek the holiest spot in your city, I should not go to your splendid sanctuaries, but to closets of private prayer. Perhaps the "Holy of Holies" among you is some dark narrow room, from which most of us would shrink as unfit for human habitation; but God dwells there. He hears there music more grateful than the swell of all your organs; sees there a beauty such as nature, in these her robes of spring, does not unfold; for there he meets, and sees, and hears the humblest, most thankful, most trustful worshipper; sees the sorest trials serenely borne, the deepest injuries forgiven; sees toils and sacrifices cheerfully sustained, and death approached through poverty and lonely illness with a triumphant faith. The consecration which such virtues shed over the obscurest spot, is not and cannot be communicated by any of those outward rites, by which our splendid structures are dedicated to God.

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#### THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.

There is one grand all-comprehending church; and if I am a Christian I belong to it, and no man can shut me out of it. You may exclude me

from your Roman church, your Episcopal church, and your Calvinistic church, on account of supposed defects in my creed or my sect, and I am content to be excluded. But I will not be severed from the great body of Christ. Who shall sunder me from such men as Fenelon, and Pascal, and Boromeo, from Archbishop Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, and John Howard? Who can rupture the spiritual bond between these men and myself? Do I not hold them dear? Does not their spirit, flowing out through their writings and lives, penetrate my soul? Are they not a portion of my being? Am I not a different man from what I should have been, had not these and other like spirits acted on mine? And is it in the power of synod or conclave, or of all the ecclesiastical combinations on earth, to part me from them? I am bound to them by thought and affection; and can these be suppressed by the bull of a pope or the excommunication of a council? The soul breaks scornfully these barriers, these webs of spiders, and joins itself to the great and good; and if it possess their spirit, will the great and good, living or dead, cast it off, because it has not enrolled itself in this or another sect? A pure mind is free of the universe. It belongs to the church, the family of the pure in all worlds. Virtue is no local thing. It is not honourable, because born in this community or that, but for its own independent everlasting beauty. This is the bond of the universal church. No man can be excommunicated from it but by himself, by the death of goodness in his own breast. All sentences of exclusion are vain, if he do not dissolve the tie of purity which binds him to all holy souls.

## THE DIFFICULTY OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

It is a common notion, that it is no great task to acquire religious truths, in a country which enjoys, as we do, a revelation from God. The revelation is thought to save us the trouble of research, to do our work for us. But this is a great error. You should learn, that the very familiarity of a revelation hides its truths from us, or is an obstacle to clear comprehension. Abstract words, continually sounded in our ears, lose their meaning and force, and are among the last words which we really understand. The language of Christianity, which has come down from distant ages; which in every age has received a colouring from prevalent errors, passions, and corruptions; on which men of different conditions, interests, feelings, and mental powers, have fastened different interpretations; which we heard before we could think, and to which we attached the narrow, earthly conceptions of the opening intellect; this language it is an immense toil to divest of all false associations, and to restore to its original significance. Add to this the difficulty which springs from the refined, spiritual, sublime character of moral and religious truth, and you will learn what you must do to seize this pearl of great price. What a work is it to form a true idea of God; to separate from him all material forms and attributes, all human passions and human limitations! How hard to separate from him all self-reference and arbitrariness, all love of rule, of homage, and kingly power! How hard to contemplate him as calm, unimpassioned reason; as impartial, disinterested, all-comprehending love; as having no will but the everlasting law of righteousness; as having

no favourites; as the ever-present inspirer and judge of every soul! How hard to look through the multiplied forces and agencies of the universe, to one central, all-pervading Power; beyond the endless mutations and conflicts of human life, to one unchangeable, all-reconciling Wisdom! The true idea of God, that highest thought of angels, demands for its development the study of a life. How hard, too, is it to attain to the true idea of Christian Duty; to purify this from all debasing mixtures; to keep it from being stained by the sophistry of the passions, by the interpretations of theologians, by the moral standard of our age, by the spirit and practice of the world and the church! How hard, again, to attain to the true idea of Man; to discern the greatness of our nature and its affinity with God, amidst its present ruins; to comprehend it as revealed in the character and life of Christ!

Go to Jesus Christ for guidance, inspiration, and strength in your office. This precept is easily uttered, but not easily obeyed. Nothing indeed is harder than to place ourselves near Jesus Christ. The way to him is blocked up on every side. Interpreters, churches, sects, past and present, creeds, authorities, the influences of education, all stand in our way. So many voices declaring what Christ has said, break on our ears, that his own voice is drowned. The old cry still resounds, "Lo here! and lo there!" How hard is it to get near the true Christ, to see him as he was and is, to hear his own voice, and to penetrate beneath his works and words to his spirit, to his mind and heart, to the great principles of his religion, to the grand spiritual purpose of all which he said and did! How hard to escape



our age, to penetrate through the disguises in which works of art and of theology have wrapped up Jesus, and to receive immediate, unmixed impulses from his teaching and life! And yet the privilege of communing with such a spirit is so great, and the duty of going from man to Christ is so solemn, that you must spare no effort to place yourself nearer and nearer to the Divine Master.

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#### THE DUTY OF FREE INQUIRY.

It is sometimes said, that the multitude may think on the common business of life, but not on higher subjects, and especially on religion. This, it is said, must be received on authority; on this, men in general can form no judgment of their own. But this is the last subject on which the individual should be willing to surrender himself to others' dictation. In nothing has he so strong an interest. In nothing is it so important that his mind and heart should be alive and engaged. In nothing has he readier means of judging for himself. In nothing, as history shows, is he more likely to be led astray by such as assume the office of thinking for him. Religion is a subject open to all minds. Its great truths have their foundation in the soul itself, and their proofs surround us on all sides. God has not shut up the evidence of his being in a few books, written in a foreign language, and locked up in the libraries of colleges and philosophers; but has written his name on the heavens and on the earth, and even on the minutest animal and plant; and his word, taught by Jesus Christ, was not given to scribes and lawyers, but taught to the poor, to the mass of men, on mountains, in



streets, and on the sea-shore. Let me not be told that the multitude do actually receive religion on authority, or on the word of others. I reply, that a faith so received seems to me of little worth. The precious, the living, the effectual part of a poor man's faith, is that, of which he sees the reasonableness and excellence; that, which approves itself to his intelligence, his conscience, his heart; that, which answers to deep wants in his own soul, and of which he has the witness in his own inward and outward experience. All other parts of his belief, those which he takes on blind trust, and in which he sees no marks of truth and divinity, do him little or no good. Too often they do him harm, by perplexing his simple reason, by substituting the fictions and artificial systems of theologians for the plain precepts of love, and justice, and humility, and filial trust in God. As long as it was supposed, that religion is to benefit the world by laying restraints, awakening fears, and acting as a part of the system of police, so long it was natural to rely on authority and tradition as the means of its propagation; so long it was desirable to stifle thought and inquiry on the subject. But now that we have learned, that the true office of religion is to awaken pure and lofty sentiments, and to unite man to God by rational homage and enlightened love, there is something monstrous in placing religion beyond the thought and the study of the mass of the human race.

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#### LIBERALITY ESSENTIAL TO RELIGION.

It is necessary that religion should be held and professed in a liberal spirit. Just as far as it assumes an intolerant, exclusive, sectarian form,

it subverts, instead of strengthening, the soul's freedom, and becomes the heaviest and most galling yoke which is laid on the intellect and conscience. Religion must be viewed, not as a monopoly of priests, ministers, or sects, not as conferring on any man a right to dictate to his fellow-beings, not as an instrument by which the few may awe the many, not as bestowing on one a prerogative which is not enjoyed by all, but as the property of every human being, and as the great subject for every human mind. It must be regarded as the revelation of a common Father, to whom all have equal access, who invites all to the like immediate communion, who has no favourites, who has appointed no infallible expounders of his will, who opens his works and word to every eye, and calls upon all to read for themselves, and to follow fearlessly the best convictions of their own understandings. Let religion be seized on by individuals or sects, as their special province; let them clothe themselves with God's prerogative of judgment; let them succeed in enforcing their creed by penalties of law, or penalties of opinion; let them succeed in fixing a brand on virtuous men, whose only crime is free investigation; and religion becomes the most blighting tyranny which can establish itself over the mind. You have all heard of the outward evils, which religion, when thus turned into tyranny, has inflicted; how it has dug dreary dungeons, kindled fires for the martyr, and invented instruments of exquisite torture. But to me all this is less fearful than its influence over the mind. When I see the superstitions which it has fastened on the conscience, the spiritual terror with which it has haunted and subdued

the ignorant and susceptible, the dark appalling views of God which it has spread far and wide, the dread of inquiry which it has struck into superior understandings, and the servility of spirit which it has made to pass for piety—when I see all this, the fire, the scaffold, and the outward inquisition, terrible as they are, seem to me inferior evils.

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#### UNITARIANISM.

UNITARIANISM has been made a term of so much reproach, and has been uttered in so many tones of alarm, horror, indignation, and scorn, that to many it gives only a vague impression of something monstrous, impious, unutterably perilous. To such, I would say, that this doctrine, which is considered by some, as the last and most perfect invention of Satan, the consummation of his blasphemies, the most cunning weapon ever forged in the fires of hell, amounts to this—That there is One God, even the Father; and that Jesus Christ is not this One God, but his Son and Messenger, who derived all his powers and glories from the Universal Parent, and who came into the world, not to claim supreme homage for himself, but to carry up the soul to his Father, as the Only Divine Person, the only ultimate Object of religious worship. To us, this doctrine seems not to have sprung from hell, but to have descended from the throne of God, and to invite, and attract us thither. To us, it seems to come from the Scriptures, with a voice loud as the sound of many waters, and as articulate and clear, as if Jesus, in a bodily form, were pronouncing it distinctly in our ears.

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THE THEOLOGY OF MILTON, LOCKE, AND  
NEWTON.

Our Trinitarian adversaries are perpetually ringing in our ears the names of Fathers and Reformers. We take Milton, Locke, and Newton, and place them in our front, and want no others to oppose to the whole array of great names on the opposite side. Before these intellectual suns, the stars of self-named Orthodoxy "hide their diminished heads." To these eminent men God communicated such unusual measures of light and mental energy, that their names spring up spontaneously, when we think or would speak of the greatness of our nature. Their theological opinions were the fruits of patient, profound, reverent study of the Scriptures. They came to this work, with minds not narrowed by a technical, professional education, but accustomed to broad views, to the widest range of thought. They were shackled by no party connexions. They were warped by no clerical ambition, and subdued by no clerical timidity. They came to this subject in the fulness of their strength, with free minds open to truth, and with unstained purity of life. They came to it in an age, when the doctrine of the Trinity was instilled by education, and upheld by the authority of the church, and by penal laws. And what did these great and good men, whose intellectual energy and love of truth have made them the chief benefactors of the human mind, what, we ask, did they discover in the Scriptures?—a triple divinity?—three infinite agents?—three infinite objects of worship?—three persons, each of whom possesses his own distinct offices, and yet shares equally in the Godhead with the rest?

No! Scripture joined with nature, and with that secret voice in the heart, which even idolatry could not always stifle, and taught them to bow reverently before the One Infinite Father, and to ascribe to Him alone, supreme, self-existing divinity. Our principal object in these remarks, has been to show, that as far as great names are arguments, the cause of Anti-trinitarianism, or of God's proper Unity, is supported by the strongest. But we owe it to truth to say, that we put little trust in these fashionable proofs. The chief use of great names in religious controversy, is, to balance and neutralise one another, that the unawed and unfettered mind may think and judge with a due self-reverence, and with a solemn sense of accountableness to God alone.

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#### THE DEBASING DOCTRINE OF TOTAL CORRUPTION.

Some of the most affecting tokens of God's love within and around us are obscured by this gloomy theology. The glorious faculties of the soul, its high aspirations, its sensibility to the great and good in character, its sympathy with disinterested and suffering virtue, its benevolent and religious instincts, its thirst for happiness not found on earth, these are overlooked or thrown into the shade, that they may not disturb the persuasion of man's natural corruption. Ingenuity is employed to disparage what is interesting in the human character. Whilst the bursts of passion in the newborn child are gravely urged, as indications of a native rooted corruption; its bursts of affection, its sweet smile, its innocent and irrepressible joy, its loveliness and beauty, are not listened to, though they plead



more eloquently its alliance with higher natures. The sacred and tender affections of home; the unwearied watchings and cheerful sacrifices of parents; the reverential, grateful assiduity of children, smoothing an aged father's or mother's descent to the grave; woman's love, stronger than death; the friendship of brothers and sisters; the anxious affection, which tends around the bed of sickness; the subdued voice, which breathes comfort into the mourner's heart; all the endearing offices, which shed a serene light through our dwellings; these are explained away by the thorough advocates of this system, so as to include no real virtue, so as to consist with a natural aversion to goodness. Even the higher efforts of disinterested benevolence and the most unaffected expressions of piety, if not connected with what is called "the true faith," are, by the most rigid disciples of the doctrine which I oppose, resolved into the passion for distinction, or some other working of "unsanctified nature." Thus Trinitarianism and its kindred doctrines, have a tendency to veil God's goodness, to sully his fairest works, to dim the lustre of those innocent and pure affections, which a divine breath kindles in the soul; to blight the beauty and freshness of creation, and in this way, to consume the very nutriment of piety. We know, and rejoice to know, that in multitudes, this tendency is counteracted by a cheerful temperament, a benevolent nature, and a strength of gratitude, which burst the shackles of a melancholy system. But from the nature of the doctrine, the tendency exists, and is strong; and an impartial observer will often discern it, resulting in gloomy, depressing views of life and the universe.



Trinitarianism, by thus tending to exclude bright and enlarging views of the creation, seems to me not only to chill the heart, but to injure the understanding as far as moral and religious truth is concerned.

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#### THE PURER PIETY OF UNITARIANISM.

Unitarianism is a system most favourable to piety, because it presents to the mind One, and only one, Infinite Person, to whom supreme homage is to be paid. It does not weaken the energy of religious sentiment by dividing it among various objects. It collects and concentrates the soul on One Father, of unbounded, undivided, unrivalled glory. To Him, it teaches the mind to rise through all beings. Around Him it gathers all the splendours of the universe. To Him it teaches us to ascribe whatever good we receive or behold; the beauty and magnificence of nature, the liberal gifts of providence, the capacities of the soul, the bonds of society, and especially the riches of grace and redemption, the mission, and powers, and beneficent influences of Jesus Christ. All happiness it traces up to the Father, as the sole source; and the mind, which these views have penetrated, through this intimate association of everything exciting and exalting in the universe, with One Infinite Parent, can and does offer itself up to him with the intensest and profoundest love, of which human nature is susceptible. The Trinitarian indeed professes to believe in one God, and means to hold fast to this truth. But three persons, having distinctive qualities and relations, of whom one is sent and another the sender, one is given and another the giver, of whom one

intercedes and another hears the intercession, of whom one takes flesh, and another never becomes incarnate, three persons, thus discriminated, are as truly three objects of the mind, as if they were acknowledged to be separate divinities; and from the principles of our nature, they cannot act on the mind as deeply and powerfully as one Infinite Person, to whose sole goodness all happiness is ascribed. To multiply infinite objects for the heart, is to distract it. To scatter the attention among three equal persons, is to impair the power of each. The more strict and absolute the unity of God, the more easily and intimately all the impressions and emotions of piety flow together, and are condensed into one glowing thought, one thrilling love. No language can express the absorbing energy of the thought of one Infinite Father. When vitally implanted in the soul, it grows and gains strength for ever. It enriches itself by every new view of God's word and works; gathers tribute from all regions and all ages; and attracts into itself all the rays of beauty, glory, and joy, in the material and spiritual creation.

My hearers, as you would feel the full influence of God upon your souls, guard sacredly, keep unobscured and unsullied, that fundamental and glorious truth, that there is One, and only One Almighty Agent in the universe, One Infinite Father. Let this truth dwell in me in its uncorrupted simplicity, and I have the spring and nutriment of an ever-growing piety. I have an object for my mind towards which all things bear me. I know whither to go in all trial, whom to bless in all joy, whom to adore in all I behold.

Trinitarianism, is a riddle. Men call it a mystery; but it is mysterious, not like the great truths of religion, by its vastness and grandeur, but by the irreconcilable ideas which it involves. One God, consisting of three persons or agents, is so strange a being, so unlike our own minds, and all others with which we hold intercourse; is so misty, so incongruous, so contradictory, that he cannot be apprehended with that distinctness and that feeling of reality, which belong to the opposite system. Such a heterogeneous being, who is at the same moment one and many; who includes in his own nature the relations of Father and Son, or, in other words, is Father and Son to himself; who, in one of his persons, is at the same moment the supreme God and a mortal man, omniscient and ignorant, almighty and impotent; such a being is certainly the most puzzling and distracting object ever presented to human thought. Trinitarianism, instead of teaching an intelligible God, offers to the mind a strange compound of hostile attributes, bearing plain marks of those ages of darkness, when Christianity shed but a faint ray, and the diseased fancy teemed with prodigies and unnatural creations. In contemplating a being, who presents such different and inconsistent aspects, the mind finds nothing to rest upon; and instead of receiving distinct and harmonious impressions, is disturbed by shifting, unsettled images. To commune with such a being must be as hard, as to converse with a man of three different countenances, speaking with three different tongues. The believer in this system must forget it, when he prays, or he could find no repose in devotion. Who can compare it in distinctness, reality, and

power, with the simple doctrine of One Infinite Father?

The injury to religion, from irrational doctrines when thoroughly believed, is immense. The human soul has a unity. Its various faculties are adapted to one another. One life pervades it; and its beauty, strength, and growth, depend on nothing so much, as on the harmony and joint action of all its principles. To wound and degrade it in any of its powers, and especially in the noble and distinguishing power of reason, is to inflict on it universal injury. No notion is more false, than that the heart is to thrive by dwarfing the intellect; that perplexing doctrines are the best food of piety; that religion flourishes most luxuriantly in mists and darkness. Reason was given for God as its great object; and for him it should be kept sacred, invigorated, clarified, protected from human usurpation, and inspired with a meek self-reverence.

The soul never acts so effectually or joyfully, as when all its powers and affections conspire; as when thought and feeling, reason and sensibility, are called forth together by one great and kindling object. It will never devote itself to God with its whole energy, whilst its guiding faculty sees in him a being to shock and confound it. We want a harmony in our inward nature. We want a piety, which will join light and fervour, and on which the intellectual power will look benignantly. We want religion to be so exhibited, that, in the clearest moments of the intellect, its signatures of truth will grow brighter; that instead of tottering, it will gather strength and stability from the progress of the human mind. These wants we believe to be met by

Unitarian Christianity, and therefore we prize it as the best friend of piety.

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#### THE BALEFUL NATURE OF A PRIESTHOOD.

The adaptation of the church to the promotion of holiness among men, is its grand excellence; and where it accomplishes this end, its work is done, and no greater can be conceived on earth or in heaven. The moment we shut our eyes on this truth, and conceive of the church as serving us by forms and ordinances, which are effectual only in the hands of privileged officials or priests, we plunge into the region of shadows and superstitions. We have no ground to tread on, no light to guide us. This mysterious power, lodged in the hands of a few fellow-creatures, tends to give a servile spirit to the mass of Christians, to impair manliness and self-respect, to subdue the intellect to the reception of the absurdest dogmas. Religion loses its simple grandeur, and degenerates into mechanism and form. The conscience is quieted by something short of true repentance; something besides purity of heart and life is made the qualification for heaven. The surest device for making the mind a coward and a slave, is a wide-spread and closely-cemented church, the powers of which are concentrated in the hands of a "sacred order," and which has succeeded in arrogating to its rites or ministers a sway over the future world, over the soul's everlasting weal or woe. The inevitable, degrading influence of such a church, is demonstrative proof against its divine original.

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#### RELIGIOUS TERROR.

In all ages, and all churches, terror confers a



tremendous influence on him who can spread it; and through this instrument, the Protestant minister, whilst disclaiming Papal pretensions, is able, if so minded, to build up a spiritual despotism. That this means of subjugating the mind should be too freely used and dreadfully perverted, we cannot wonder when we consider that no talent is required to spread a panic, and that coarse minds and hard hearts are signally gifted for this work of torture. The progress of intelligence is undoubtedly narrowing the power which the minister gains by excessive appeals to men's fears, but has by no means destroyed it; for as yet the intellect, even in Protestant countries, has exerted itself comparatively little on religion; and, ignorance begetting a passive, servile state of mind, the preacher, if so disposed, finds little difficulty in breaking some, if not many spirits by terror. The effects of this ill-gotten power are mournful on the teacher and the taught. The panic-smitten hearer, instructed that safety is to be found in bowing to an unintelligible creed, and too agitated for deliberate and vigorous thought, resigns himself a passive subject to his spiritual guides, and receives a faith by which he is debased. Nor does the teacher escape unhurt; for all usurpation on men's understandings, begets in him who exercises it, a dread and resistance of the truth which threatens its subversion. Hence ministers have so often fallen behind their age, and been the chief foes of the master spirits who have improved the world. They have felt their power totter at the tread of an independent thinker. By a kind of instinct, they have fought against the light, before which the shades of superstition were vanishing, and have received



their punishment in the darkness and degradation of their own minds.

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#### THE VICTIMS OF BIGOTRY.

I look with a solemn joy on the heroic spirits, who have met freely and fearlessly, pain and death in the cause of truth and human rights. But there are other victims of intolerance, on whom I look with unmixed sorrow. They are those, who, spell-bound by early prejudice, or by intimidations from the pulpit and the press, dare not think; who anxiously stifle every doubt or misgiving in regard to their opinions, as if to doubt were a crime; who shrink from the seekers after truth as from infection; who deny all virtue, which does not wear the livery of their own sect; who, surrendering to others their best powers, receive unresistingly a teaching which wars against reason and conscience; and who think it a merit to impose on such as live within their influence, the greivous bondage, which they bear themselves. How much to be deplored is it, that religion, the very principle which is designed to raise men above the judgment and power of man, should become the chief instrument of usurpation over the soul.

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#### THE UNITARIAN'S LOVE OF HIS FAITH.

We prize and would spread our views, because we believe that they reveal God to us in greater glory, and bring us nearer to him, than any other. We are conscious of a deep want, which the creation cannot supply; the want of a Perfect Being, on whom the strength of our love may be centred, and of an Almighty Father, in whom our weaknesses, imperfections, and sorrows may find

resource; and such a Being and Father, Unitarian Christianity sets before us. For this we prize it above all price. We can part with every other good. We can endure the darkening of life's fairest prospects. But this bright, consoling doctrine of One God, even the Father, is dearer than life, and we cannot let it go. Through this faith, every thing grows brighter to our view. Born of such a Parent, we esteem our existence an inestimable gift. We meet everywhere our Father, and his presence is as a sun shining on our path. We see him in his works, and hear his praise rising from every spot which we tread. We feel him near in our solitudes, and sometimes enjoy communion with him more tender than human friendship. We see him in our duties, and perform them more gladly, because they are the best tribute we can offer our Heavenly Benefactor. Even the consciousness of sin, mournful as it is, does not subvert our peace; for in the mercy of God, as made manifest in Jesus Christ, we see an inexhaustible fountain of strength, purity, and pardon for all, who, in filial reliance, seek these heavenly gifts. Through this faith, we are conscious of a new benevolence springing up to our fellow-creatures, purer and more enlarged than natural affection. Towards all mankind we see a rich and free love flowing from the common Parent, and touched by this love, we are the friends of all. We compassionate the most guilty, and would win them back to God. Through this faith, we receive the happiness of an ever-enlarging hope. There is no good too vast for us to anticipate for the universe or for ourselves, from such a Father as we believe in. We hope from him, what we deem his

greatest gift, even the gift of his own Spirit, and the happiness of advancing for ever in truth and virtue, in power and love, in union of mind with the Father and the Son. We are told, indeed, that our faith will not prove an anchor in the last hour. But we have known those, whose departure it has brightened; and our experience of its power, in trial and peril, has proved it to be equal to all the wants of human nature. We doubt not, that, to its sincere followers, death will be a transition to the calm, pure, joyful mansions prepared by Christ for his disciples. There we expect to meet that great and good Deliverer. With the eye of faith, we already see him looking round him with celestial love on all of every name, who have imbibed his spirit. His spirit; his loyal and entire devotion to the will of his Heavenly Father; his universal, unconquerable benevolence, through which he freely gave from his pierced side his blood, his life for the salvation of the world; this divine love, and not creeds, and names, and forms, will then be found to attract his supreme regard. This spirit we trust to see in multitudes of every sect and name; and we trust, too, that they, who now reproach us, will at that day recognise, in the dreaded Unitarian, this only badge of Christ, and will bid him welcome to the joy of our common Lord. We desire to glorify God, to promote a purer, nobler, happier piety.

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#### CHANNING'S LAST WORDS IN PUBLIC.

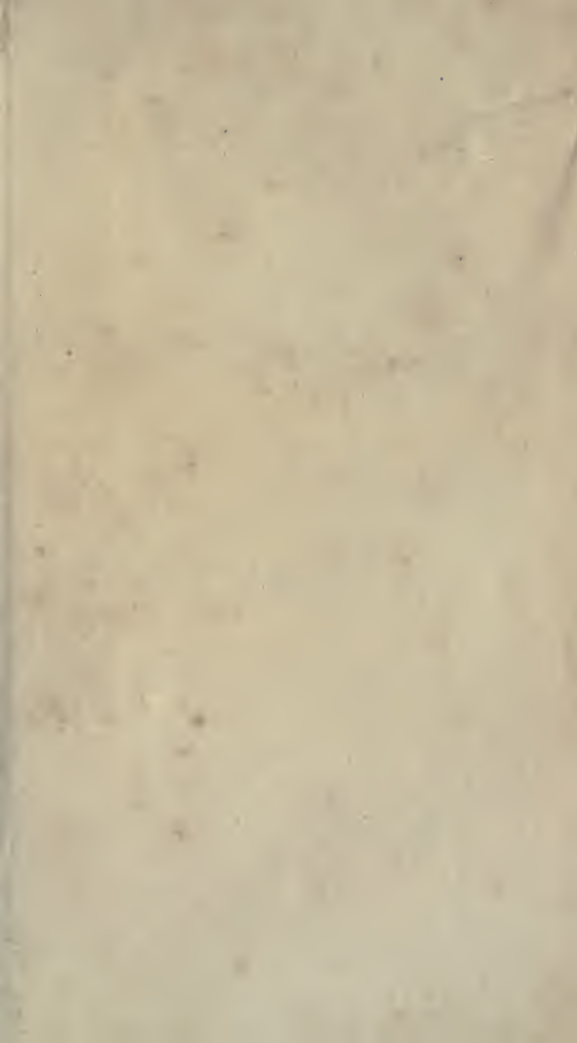
Mighty powers are at work in the world. Who can stay them? God's word has gone forth, and "it cannot return to him void." A new comprehension of the Christian spirit, a new

reverence for humanity, a new feeling of brotherhood, and of all men's relations to the common Father—this is among the signs of our times. We see it; do we not feel it? Before this, all oppressions are to fall. Society silently pervaded by this, is to change its aspect of universal warfare for peace. The power of selfishness, all-grasping, and seemingly invincible, is to yield to this diviner energy. The song of angels, "On Earth Peace," will not always sound as fiction. O come, thou kingdom of Heaven, for which we daily pray! Come, Friend and Saviour of the race, who didst shed thy blood on the cross, to reconcile man to man, and Earth to Heaven! Come, ye predicted ages of righteousness and love, for which the faithful have so long yearned. Come, Father Almighty, and crown with thine omnipotence, the humble strivings of thy children, to subvert oppression and wrong, to spread light and freedom, peace and joy, the truth and spirit of thy Son, through the whole earth.

FINIS.

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